

The Ramakrishna Mission
Institute of Culture Library

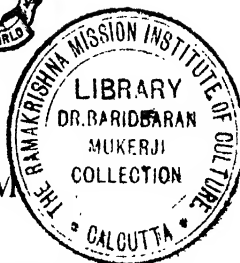
Presented by

Dr. B. B. Mukherjee

RMICL-8

6

3919



ISLĀM

BY

MUHAMMAD SARFARĀZ HUSAYN
QĀRĪ.

*They desire to put out the LIGHT OF GOD
with their mouths ; but God will perfect His Light,
averse though the faithless be !—The Qur-ān.*

Calcutta:

1910.

(No Rights Reserved.)

RM	
Acc. No.	3919
	297
Cl.	2AR
	-
	-
	R.G.
rd	✓
	R.G.

“The world which credits what is done
Is told to all that might have been.”

In Memoriam.

Nearly three years ago, the Editor of the *Light of the World*, a London monthly devoted to the diffusion and inculcation of the ideal of universal brotherhood, amity and concord, was asked by some of his European friends to supplement his efforts in that direction by the publication of a series of booklets enunciating the true teachings of the master-minds of the East. It was urged that he should begin with the saints and sages of Islām, as the spiritual side of that system had not received anything like an adequate treatment in the West. In furtherance of this object he undertook the publication of the present series of essays to which he intended to prefix an introductory sketch on Sūfī-ism or Esoteric Islām. Since then a great calamity befell him and he was stricken with a sickness of the soul. The eagle of his genius, soaring aloft in the empyreal regions of communion with the Unseen, was

suddenly struck with the lightning of mundane cares. Caught in the meshes of the World, the powerful pinions of inspiration and ecstasy drooped, the light of prophecy and prevision dimmed and darkened, and he was hurled head-long down into the abysmal depths of dejection and despair. He abandoned—temporarily, it is to be hoped—his earnest and enthusiastic devotion to Literature and Religion for a half-hearted allegiance to Law and Politics. The sacred fire of his Inspiration was hushed in the silence and gloom of doubt and despondency. The lamp of his Hope was shattered and his *Light of the World* eclipsed. Yet he cannot find peace and repose until the burden of his promise is removed and he redeems in some measure his pledge to his friends. A consciousness of the ever-presence of Death, which over-shadows us all, and an earnest desire for the speedy fulfilment of his promise are the justifications for the publication of this little volume with all its imperfections. The storm and stress of work and worry and the endless delays caused by the printers have also resulted in the abandonment of the contemplated

introductory sketch. At the suggestion of some English friends no attempt was made to improve the language of these essays as any effort in this direction would have destroyed the peculiar charm and quaint beauty of the artless diction of the author. Sarfarāz Husayn Qārī is one of those lay missionaries of peace and goodwill who, rising above the petty tyranny of sects and creeds, devote their lives to the service of Humanity and God. The sacrifices and sufferings of the Qārī for the cause nearest and dearest to his heart may be known only to the few, but his sincere and silent efforts have brought light and calm to many a darkened and distressed soul. He comes of a well-known family of Qārīs (Reciters of the Qur-ān) who held honourable posts under the Mughal Emperors. Born in Delhi in 1867 he was initiated in the Chistiyyah Nidhā-miyyah Fraternity in 1887. In 1897-98 he wrote a series of Urdu novels on moral and social themes. In 1899 and 1900 he contributed a series of articles to American periodicals on the "Beauties and Philosophy of Islām." In December 1900, he represented Islām at the Conference of Religions held at Muttra. In 1905-06

he paid a visit to Japan in connection with the contemplated conference of the Religions of the World.

In conclusion, the present editor avails himself of this opportunity to express his sense of heart-felt gratitude and profound thankfulness to his friends—the late lamented Count Henry Coudenhove-Kalergi, C.I.M., Ph. D., LL.D., of Schloss Ronsperg, Austria; the Hon. Mr. Justice A. D. Russell, of Edinburgh; Mrs. Louisa A. Shiffner of Coombe Banks, Sussex; Miss Pill; Miss E. M. Pope; Miss Timannus; Mr. and Mrs. Westbrook; Major-General Dickson; Herr Schmitz du Moulin; Mr. E. S. M. Perowne; Mr. Douglas Ainslie; Prince ‘Ala-es-Sultanah of Persia; Chevky Pasha and Muhammad Ali Chevky Bey of Constantinople and others—for their genuine and generous sympathy with his aims and aspirations when he was lonely and forlorn in the Wilderness of the West.

MUHAMMAD NŪR-ALLĀH *al-DĀ‘I*.

Lā Makān.



Major-General J. P. B. DICKSON, C. P., C. M. G., A.C. & C.

THE BEAUTIES OF ISLAM.

I

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS.

IN this short essay, it is intended to give an outline of the spiritual teachings of the religion of Islām, which was given to the Arabs by Muhammad the Prophet fourteen centuries ago. It is the religion of many countries at the present day and millions of people live and die by it. The followers of this religion are called Muslims (Moslems) and their Scripture is the Qur-ān (Koran). According to the direction of the Qur-ān to Muhammad—*Qul innamā anā basharun mithlukum yūkū ilayyā*: Say, I am only a human being like unto you, save that I am inspired (18, 110)—he is regarded as the inspired man, the Prophet. The highest aim, the Goal, of Islam, is the Realisation of Perfect Oneness, Perfect Harmony, and the spiritual literature of Islam is full of easy, natural and practical instructions

leading to the attainment of this end. A few preliminary points might best be cleared by means of the following questions and answers. The Arabic quotations are chiefly from the Qur-ān.

(1) What is the meaning of the word "Islām"?

It is an Arabic word meaning "submission", "resignation," "striving after the Truth," the highest state of "being," absolutely free from all attributes and opposites.

(2) What is one, who professes Islam, required to believe in, to attain to this highest state of "being"?

Yūminūna bi 'l-ghayb—In the "Unseen."

(3) Where is that Unseen?

Wa fī anfusikum—"Within you."

(4) What is that Unseen?

Allāhu nūr al-samāwati wa 'l-ard—"It is the Light of Heaven and Earth" (24, 35), Light of everything—Light, though not perceptible to the senses, nor comprehensible to reason. *Subhānahu wa ta 'ālā 'anmā yasifūn*—Hallowed is It and high above all human description.

(5) Can that "Unseen" be realised by mortal man, reflected or represented by him?

Yes—*Innī jā'ilun fī 'l-ardi khalīfah.*
“There is in the world our representative.”

(6) Who will realise It and by what means?

*Wa'lladhīna jāhadū fīnā lanahdīyannahum
ubulanā*—“Those who strive after Us, *most*
assuredly do We lead them to Our Path”—*i. e.*
those who strive after the Light, the Light
shines forth on them.

(7) How to strive after ?

*Afī'ū'llāha wa afī'ū 'l-rasūla wa ūlī'l-amri
minikum*—Follow the Light (Allāh), the fully
Enlightened, the inwardly Illumined one (Rasūl
= Prophet) and the Shaykh (Sheikh), the
Spiritual Guide, the Commander of the Order
of the Soul or Spirit.

7 (a). And what is the Soul or Spirit ?

Qulī 'l-rūhu min amri rabbī—the Soul or
Spirit is the *order* or reason of God, and God
is the Light of Heaven and Earth, therefore
reason of Light, *i. e.*, essence, substance or *some-*
thing quite indescribable of Light, which latter is
also indescribable ; therefore it is the “ indes-
cribable ” of the “ indescribable.”

(8) What does Allah or the Light command ?

1. *Wa mā khalaqtu 'l-jinna wa 'l-insa illā*

li-ya'budūni (ay li-ya'rifūni)—All created beings are to “know,” to “realise.”

2. *‘Wa yuqīmūna ‘l-salāta wa mimmā razaqnāhum yunfiqūn*—“Establish prayer i. e. have secret communion with the Light. *Ka’anna-ka tarāhu*—“as if thou art face to face with it.” “And give out of what is given unto you,” (i.e., equalise comforts, or establish equality, universal brotherhood).

8 (a). Why prayer?

Inna ‘l-salāta tanhá ‘ani ‘l-fahshā’ wa ‘l-munkar—Prayer keeps away alien principles, and preserves purity and purity alone.

8 (b). And giving away?

Lau tanālū l-birra hattā tunfiqū mimmā tuhībūn. “Thou shalt never attain unto righteousness unless thou givest away what thou lovest (or carest for, at least).”

9 What does the “Fully Enlightened One” command?

‘Ua’murukum bi ‘l-‘adli wa l-ihsāni wa itā’i dhī l-qurbā wa yanhā ‘ani ‘l-fahshā’ wa ‘l-munkarī wa ‘l-baghyi ya’izukum la’allakum tadhukkurūn.

He teaches you *justice, equality, benevolence and charity* and forbids objectionable things.

He teaches you these, in order that you should become straight, *i.e.*, harmonised, perfected."

Wa yuzakkihim anfasahum, and he cleanses their hearts, purifies the mind, inaugurates true union (*wisāl*).

10. What does the Sheikh, or the Spiritual Guide command ?

Mūtū qabla an tamūtū—Die before you die—*i.e.*, kill your baser self, *i.e.*, control your desires, regulate your mind, senses and body and kill *that* which keeps you from so regulating them. *Yā bunayyā fikruka fīka yakfīka dā'un wa dawā'un fīka anta jismun saghīrun wa fīka 'ālamun kabīrun anta umm al-kitāb*—"O my son, thine own meditation within thyself is quite sufficient for thee ; both the disease and the remedy are within thine ownself ; thou art a small body, but within thee there is a vast region, a great universe—makrokosm. Thou art the Mother of the Book" (*i.e.* source of Knowledge).

In the light of what has been very briefly and perhaps inadequately described above, the theories of "Islam," so far as they can be clothed in words by the humble writer of this essay, can be summarised as follows :—(1) That

there is a self-existing *Something*, a perfect whole, *Alastu birabbikum qālū balá*—Am I not your Lord? They answered “Aye”—*Innī anā’llāh*—I am Allah, All or self. *Huwa ’llāhu ’lladhī lā ilāha illā huwa* He is such that there is none but *He*. (2) That, that self-existing *Something* is manifested in *everything* visible, conceivable &c. That that perfect *whole* is *wholly* manifested. *Allāhu nūr al-samāwāti wa’l-ard*—God is the Light of Heaven and Earth, *i.e.*, every thing is His manifestation. *Huwa ’l-awwalu wa’l-ākhiru wa’l-zāhiru wa’l-bāṭin*—“He is the Beginning, He is the Ending, He is the Evolution, He is the Involution.” But for that *involved* and self-existing *Something*, nothing evolved and apparent could have been visible, conceivable, and so on. (3) That *everything* which is thus the manifestation of that *Something* can realise that *Something*. “*Wamā khalaqtu ’l-jinna wa ’l-insa illā li-ya’budū (li-ya’rifūn)*—All are to know, to realise. (4) That the perfect state of realisation is the complete absence of the conceivable difference of *everything* and *something*, *i.e.*, realisation of a perfect *whole*: *Wa yabqá wajhu rabbika*. “and shall only endure the *audience* of Light.”

Guided by these theories, the practical instructions in the dualistic school of thought in Islam begin thus :—

(1) That there is one Spiritual Being, Maker, Preserver and Destroyer of every thing :—*Inna li'llāhi wa inna ilayhi rāji'ūn* : “Surely we emanate from God and towards Him we are progressing upwards.” That the soul or spirit is like a mirror wherein He is reflected.—*Innā 'aradnā l-amānata 'alā 'l-samāwāti wa 'l-ardi wa 'l-jibāli fa-abayna an yahmilnahā wa ashfaqna minhā wa hamalahā l-insān* : “We offered Our *Trust* to the Heavens and the Earth, and the Mountains, but they declined to bear its burden and were afraid thereof ; and Man came forward and bore it” (33, 72) i.e. man is perfectly blessed with that Trust—which is all *Light*.

That actions regulate *life*—*In ahsantum ahsantum li-anfusikum wa in asa'tum fulahā*—“ If you do good, it is for yourself, and if you do wrong, it is also for yourself”—*Man ihtalā fa-innamā yahladī linafsih wa man dallā fa-innamā yadillu 'alayhā*—“Whosoever taketh the right path, certainly doeth good to himself.

Whosoever taketh the wrong path, certainly doeth wrong to himself."

This more or less represents the Karma *Yoga* of Islam—or the most elementary teachings for the masses. Appropriate and exhaustive instructions to guide and regulate *actions*, are laid down in religious books and the professors of Islam are required to conform to them in their own interests, as well as in those of Humanity. *Prayer, charity, fellow-feeling, and purity* of thought and action, have been encouraged in various ways. Full and practical instructions for the guidance of all are laid down, and to go by them is ordinarily considered to be very safe and sure. Similarly *absence* (of prayer), *selfishness, pride* and all *impurities* are discouraged and legislated against. Once thus disciplined, one at once stands on a vantage-ground, quite capable of receiving *finer and higher* instructions as to the realisation of the Self which is the aim—the *goal*. In Islam, primarily, very great importance has been attached to this *disciplining*. Control of body, control of senses and last, though not the least, control of mind, have been throughout regarded as the first-fruits and blessings of Existence, and have

been very earnestly offered to Mankind by means of definite, easy, natural and practical instructions. This is what is generally understood by the *Sharī'at* of Islam.

We have seen so far that the beginner in Islam, the seeker of Light, has to undergo the *discipline* (administered by the Sheikh or the Disciplined Guide who traces his discipline and order to the Prophet or the fully Enlightened, —the Self-illuminated) necessary to place him in a position, fitted to advance him spiritually. We shall now try to see how he is then advanced towards the realisation of the Supreme Being, the discovery of the Light within and without, the perfect knowledge and realisation of the self. It is to be remembered that the seeker of Light, in this way, has to begin with Duality, as it were, but as will be shown later on, he ends in Unity, Oneness, Harmony, something quite indescribable.

Man 'arafa rabbahū qalla lisānuhū, Whoso discovereth the Light, becometh dumb *i. e.* that state of mind, (if it can be called a state of mind) is indescribable. It is perfect Unison, perfect Peace, Harmony, Rest, Being=Islam.

So we take up the "Disciplined" student. If he is active and worthy of "work," Service of Humanity is his *only* Path leading to the Goal. It is worthy of note that even the service of lower animals, is regarded as a sufficient means of attaining to the desired end—the Realisation of Self or the Light. In the instructive spiritual literature compiled from the sayings of great saints, Masters of mankind, curious stories are told how even the lowest class of mortals have seen the Light, simply by means of *serving* lower animals. It might not be out of place to give here one of such instructive stories. In a certain thickly populated and highly busy and active city, famine broke out for want of rain. The poor people no longer able to bear the strain, repaired to a cave, where a certain sage resided in seclusion and divine peace.

"Pray for us, Pray for the rain, Sir" was the cry of one and all.

"But I can't pray for this," was the meek and humble reply of the pious recluse.

The visitors pressed the godly saint with their continued entreaties, when at last, to their utter astonishment, the saint sighed and said,

“ You want to make me guilty of revealing the secrets of a noble soul. Very well, I will obey you, listen to me now, and go ye all to that dancing girl¹ residing in that corner of the city. She will pray for you and ye shall have plenty of rain. Believe me and go to her forthwith.”

They obeyed him. The dancing girl was in her room, which was nicely decorated and artistically furnished. The music was playing. The young woman was beautiful and charming. The party was well received according to the etiquette of such places.

“ Would you have singing, Sirs ? ”

“ But we want you to pray for the rain. People are dying on account of the famine.”

“ I, to pray !—A dancing girl to pray ! What can you mean Sirs, are you jesting—? ”

“ But we have been directed to you by—”

“ Alas ! he has torn the veil of my secret. Very well, I shall obey you but shall quit this place soon,” replied the dancing girl.

1 A dancing girl in the East is considered the most degraded of women.

Saying this she asked for water to perform ablution, preparatory to offering her *salāt* (divine worship), in turn, preparatory to praying for the rain. The servant brings the water and the basin. The dancing girl begins to wash her hands, and lo, the sky is already full of clouds. She hardly finishes half of the required course of ablutions when it begins to rain. She leaves every thing aside, does not even finish the ablutions, does not offer *salāt*, does not pray for the rain, yet it is already raining heavily.

How could they leave her without asking how she was spiritually so near God, although she was only a dancing girl ?

“I was once riding in my open palanquin, going to a friend to sing and dance. On the roadside there was a bitch lying fast asleep. The newly born blind pups were somehow separated from the mother and were crying and seeking her. I could not bear the sight, stopped the palanquin, and myself caught hold of the pups and took them to their mother’s breast, and having done this, I returned to my palanquin.

His mercy enveloped me, and then and there I became enlightened¹

Service of God's creatures is such, that a dancing girl by it becomes enlightened ! To be more authoritative on the subject, we shall try to see briefly what the *Qur-ān* has to say on the Service of Humanity—

Inna ḥādḥā 'l-qur-āna yaḥdī li'llatī hiya aqwamu wa yubashḥiru 'l-mu'minīna 'lladhīna ya'malūna 'l-sālihātī anna lahum ajrun kabīr.

Verily this *Qur-ān* leads to the best path and gives glad tidings of great fruition to the faithful who do good work.

Wa āti ilḥa 'l-qurbā haqqahū wa 'l-miskīna wa 'bna 'l-sabīl. “And give to relatives their dues, and to the poor and to the wayfarer.”

Wa 'lladhīna āmanū wa 'amilū 'l-sālihātī ūlā'ika as-hābu 'l-jannah hum jihā khālidūn— and who have faith and do good work, they are the enjoyers of Eternal Bliss.

*Qul mā anfaqtum min khayrin fa li'l-wāli-dayni wa'l-aqrabīna, wa'l-yatāmā wa'l-masākīna wa 'bni 'l-sabīl—*Spend from the stock of

1 Cf. Edwin Arnold's *Pearls of the Faith*.

goodness, for parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the wayfarer.

Wa amma'lladhina amanu wa 'amilu 'l-salihati fa yuwaffihim ujrahum.—Those who have faith and do good work they shall reap the fruit.

Wa'llakun minkum ummatun yad'una ila'l khayr—and let there be a class of people among you who should invite mankind to do good work.

Inna 'lladhina amanu wa 'amilu 'l-salihati ala'ika hum khayru'l-baniyah—Those who believe and do good work they are the best of men.

"Inna'lladhina hādū wa 'l-nasāra wa 'l-sābi'—ūna man āmana bi'llāhi wa 'l-yawmi'l-ākhirī wa amila sālihan salahum ajrahum 'inda rabbihim wa lā khawfun 'alayhim wa lā hum yakhzanūn—“Whether a man be Muslim, Jew, Christian, or Sabæan, if he believeth in God, and the Last Day, and doeth good work, verily his fruit is with his Lord, and he is free from fear and anxiety.”

Along with faith which is the basis and life of work, good work has been invariably enjoined and detailed so as to indicate definitely the service of humanity (parents, relatives, orphans, the poor and the wayfarers.)

For a student who is, so to speak, of active nature, who likes work above all things, Service of Humanity, which is in reality the Service of God, is the safest and surest guide. Such a student, when by the Command of his Sheikh (Teacher) is attached for the purpose of Service, to a convent, monastery, or a resting house gradually interests himself so much in the work, that he slowly but surely forgets his outer self, realises the real internal power actuating all his work, and this real latent power is no other than the Self, which is the aim, the Goal. He feels it, realises it, acts it, and lives it, and then he can truly sing *Inna hayatī wa nusukī wa mahyājā wa mamālī li'llāhi rabbi 'l-‘ālamīna*.—Verily my wakefulness, my sleep, my life and my death are for the Lord of the Universe.”

For the emotional *disciplined* student in Islam, the practical instructions given by a Sheikh differ in different fraternities. The simplest and commonest of them all is this. The spiritual teacher (Pir, Sheikh) after discerning which attribute of God the disciple has a special liking for, directs him to promote his faculty of love by constant meditation on that particular

attribute (e. g. mercy or the like) until the disciple no longer cares for any other attribute. So far there are three things: the Lover, the Beloved (God), and the Attribute for which God is loved. Advancing further, the student becomes forgetful of the attribute and he, at this stage, remains a lover without rhyme or reason. When love becomes more intense, the entity of the student is absorbed into that of the beloved. He is lost in It, and does not feel himself in any way separate from God. Well has it been said that *al-'ishq nārun yuhriqu mā siwa'llāh*—"Love is a fire which burns all alien things and leaves God and God alone." Thus it is through love, that the perfect state of Oneness which is the aim, the end of Islam, is attained. Students are very often expected to have loved some human being before they could reach the higher stage of divine love. Such a love is called *al-'ishq al-majāzī*, Love of the Apparent, the Unreal; and it remains for them to direct this love to the Real—*al-'ishq al-haqīqī*. By some, even the *'Ishq majāzī*, if carried to the highest pitch, is held quite sufficient for the attainment of the goal—Perfect Oneness. A very happy contrast has been drawn between

Majnūn, the Romeo of the East and the Lover of Leila (Laylá) who has been regarded as the head of the school of *'Ishq majāzī* and Mansūr—a well-known saint who was crucified for uttering the words “I am the Truth, I am God.” (Islam forbids Duality.)

Majnūn passed through three stages, when day and night he cried—

1. “I love Laylá;” then
2. “I am Laylá;” then
3. “Laylá, Laylá.”

After that he became silent, and finally expired.

Majnūn's second stage, “I am Laylá” is held to be equal to Mansūr's “I am God.” Mansūr was killed at this stage. Had he not been killed, but stuck to his utterance, “I am God,” till the time of his natural death, he would have certainly remained inferior to Majnūn, who soared higher than “I am Laylá,” and sang only “Laylá.” Majnūn's “I” ness was shaken off. He soared still higher: even the ejaculation of “Laylá” ceased. He became dumb as it were. This is the last stage—this means perfect Oneness, which is the aim, the goal.

Another process is in vogue in some fraternities. It comprises of three stages.

Fanā' fī 'l-shaykh (Annihilation or merging
into the Sheikh)

„ „ *'l-rasūl* („ „ „ into the Prophet

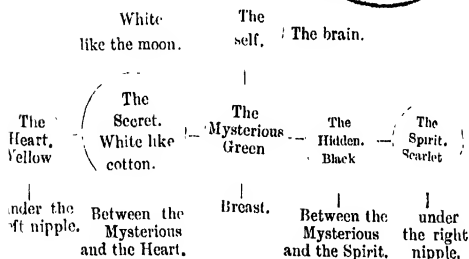
„ „ *'llāh* („ „ „ into God)

In the first stage the disciple is expected to love and look to the Sheikh as his all in all. He acts like the Sheikh, prays like the Sheikh, talks like the Sheikh, eats, drinks and walks like the Sheikh, constantly meditates on the Sheikh. Having been, by this process spiritually transformed into the Sheikh, the student is spiritually introduced to the Prophet. In this stage all his actions, thoughts and devotions are supposed to coincide with those of the Prophet. He loses his entity as it were, into that of the Prophet. The third and the last stage of being absorbed into God needs no further explanation.

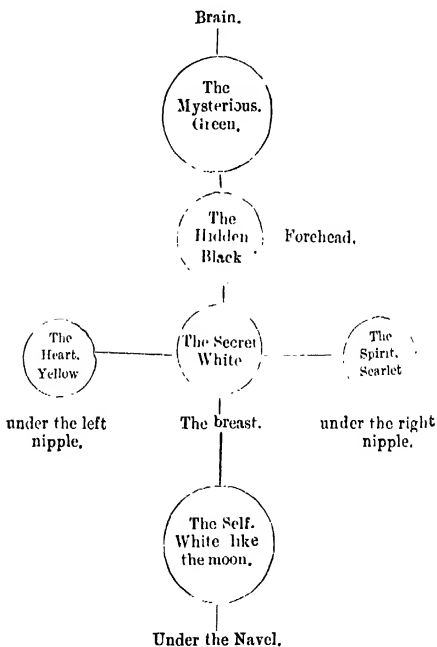
To the mystic (*disciplined* student, of course) the instructions imparted by the Sheikh, are a series of healthy spiritual exercises, tending to concentrate the mind and gradually discover the Light within. In a well-known fraternity

alled the *Naqshbandiyah*, the fixed process of
his instruction is as detailed below :

In the body of man, there are six great
centres of Light, with their respective colours :—



By some of the latest discoveries, these six centres are believed to be as under—



By means of fixed methods of contemplation, these several centres of light are discovered and become "current," when the student finds every part of his internal body spiritually lit up as it were. But at this stage he finds differences of colours. When all these six centres have become current, a certain process called "Sultān al-adhkār" the "King of Practices" is administered, whereby the student gets rid of the above described differences of colours and discovers the sameness of light, which has no colour. The whole of the Inside becomes fully illumined. Later on he discovers the same illumination Outside also, and finally cannot find any difference between the Inside and the Outside and becomes perfectly harmonised, which is the Goal, the Aim=Islam.

For the *disciplined* student of a philosophical turn of mind, the solution of the single question,

"What am I?"

forms the basis of the Realisation of self.

I am not body.

I am not the senses.

I am not the mind..

I am not this.

I am not that.

These are the answers which will suggest themselves, till at last the reality is discovered, when the logic asserts itself thus :

It is in this body.

It is in everybody.

It is everywhere.

It is omnipresent. It is all.

It is Self==It is It=Absolute Oneness=
Islam.

II.

THE BLESSED ONENESS.

THE whole mansion of Islam is built upon the infallible doctrine of *Tawhīd* or the Blessed Oneness. What is required is the fullest conception, nay, the innermost feeling and the perfect realisation of Oneness, which is Harmony—perfect Harmony. The following are the different stages of arriving at this happy end :—

- (1) Believing in Oneness,
- (2) Seeking Oneness,
- (3) Knowing Oneness, and
- (4) Realising Oneness.

The elementary teachings of Islam, commence with the simple belief in Oneness.

Qul huwa'llāhu aḥad.

—“Say, He the Lord is one,”—

Throughout the whole of the Holy Qur-ān this singular belief in One God has been most effectually taught to mankind in the simplest possible way. As illustrations, only a few quotations are given here :—

Wa ilāhukum ilāhun wāhid.

“And your God is One God.”

Allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa.

“God ! There, is no other God—but He.”

Wa mā min ilāhin illā ilāhun wāhid.

“And there is no god but one God.”

Over and over again, Nature has been called to bear witness to the existence of God, and all rational and traditional evidences have been given to prove His Oneness. In one place, how simply it is said, *Law kāna fīhimā ālihātun illā 'llāhu lafasadatu.*

“Had there been two gods in the universe, the whole system would have collapsed.”

The primary conception of God—One God, with the Muslim is that of Eternal existence of a Spiritual Being, to whom he is to return finally and eternally. The acknowledgment of this One Eternal existence is the basis of Religion. God—One God—alone is the centre of all satisfaction, all hope, all life. In his thoughts and prayers, the Muslim acknowledges God’s eternal existence, appeals to His mercy and help when in want, trusts in His justice when suffering, and is grateful to Him when happy. The primary idea of Oneness,

may have a numerical significance to the beginner, but it cannot fail to teach him that the best of human intellect, human energy, and all the noblest of human inclinations and aspirations are to be directed to *One* object. This serves to safeguard them against the weakening and wasting influences to which they would be subject, if bestowed on *several* objects. On the other hand these are employed with full advantage, and their integrity and success completely secured by directing them towards one spiritual object. A good deal of mental confusion, with its harmful spiritual effects, can be avoided by the simple belief in One God. This is the least benefit to be derived by the believer in Oneness.

Unconscious of the deeper meaning of the Blessed Oneness, the average Muslim with his simple beliefs of God's Eternity, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Mercy and Knowledge, &c., is apparently satisfied with leading a virtuous life, according to the injunctions of the Code of Religion, always trusting in His mercy to be pardoned for his unavoidable faults, or to be rewarded if he should fulfil His will. To him, his God is more or less a practical and personal

God (by no means a physical one). Sometimes he goes to Him for help, sometimes he trembles before Him and asks forgiveness, but always trusts in His justice and mercy. This is the first or the preliminary stage of believing in Oneness. As is only natural, in this stage, the conception of God is mostly a concrete one. God is only conceived through His attributes. There is no abstract idea of God. But the belief in the various attributes of God, and all the ways of prayer and ordinary life, have been so arranged as to be best capable of directing the attention of the believer to the abstract idea of God. For instance it has been prescribed that prayer is not perfect without the conviction of God's presence. The first condition of prayer is the sense of God's presence which is best calculated to advance the student in the way of grasping the higher abstract idea of God. The attributes of God, such as the Merciful, the Giver, the Elevator, the Owner, the Knower,¹ &c., have been defined in such a

1 Sir Edwin Arnold's *Pearls of the Faith* illustrates the significance of the ninety-nine "beautiful names" of God.

way as to give the student an idea of the boundless and infinite nature of God. Still the first name on the list of names of God is "Allah" which denotes abstract God. Moreover, after mentioning all the attributes of God, it has been emphasised—

Ya man taqaddasa 'anī 'l-ashbāhi dhātuh.

Wa taazzahu 'an mushabahāti 'l-amthāli siḡātuh.

"O Thou ! whose abstract nature is free from illustrations and whose attributes are beyond examples"—i.e. Thou canst not be described and Thy attributes cannot be compared to things that can be conceived. For instance, the belief that He knows, implies that His knowledge is his own peculiar knowledge which cannot be compared to our knowledge or the ways of getting it. He exists, in a sense, by Himself, and all his attributes exist eternally in Himself. Superiority of God in all its details on the one hand, and His singularity and abstraction on the other, have been described and inculcated in such a way as to create in the mind of the student a desire to know Him, and this desire becoming intensified, the student enters into the next or the second stage

of *Search* and becomes a Seeker after Oneness.

The process of *Search* peculiarly begins in a negative way. The student is taught slowly but surely to give up all the attachments and occupations considered ungodly and transitory, for they cannot contribute to what should be taken as godly and eternal. Passion for objects of the senses is by degrees withdrawn. The value of worldly selfish acquirements diminishes and the amount of momentary pleasure hitherto obtained from wordly objects and considered as the chief aim of life lessens more and more until it becomes nil. Moderation as the means of controlling passion, prayer as the means of fanning the Sacred Fire, and charity as the means of *crossing* all selfishness, are made the guiding principles of the seeker's instructions. A retreat is brought about from the objective to the subjective, a happy change is effected, a sacred transformation takes place, a mysterious re-birth realised, and then the truth of the divine teachings of Lord Jesus Christ, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God (John, III. 3)

is fully realised. Blessed are those whom God chooses to deal with so gracefully. Blessed are those who seek Him and find Him.

Wealth, which has all along been regarded as a possession and an achievement, becomes the mistress of charity and is freely spent in the service of humanity. Woman, who has hitherto been regarded as the emporium of passion, becomes the temple of divine adoration and helps the spiritual growth. All crookedness disappears, all thorns are turned into flowers, and lo! "Hate loves and pride becomes a worshipper." This done, the seeker faithfully, diligently and resignedly obeys all the injunctions of religion, hoping at every step that this, that or the other act of virtue, prayer or charity, will bring him the desired fruit, but all in vain. There is no specific for it. No human action, no human devotion, however helpful in its nature, can guarantee success. A feeling of disappointment enters the heart. "Am I lost and lost for ever?" asks the soul. Where is the answer? Every thing else being condemned and not relied on, His grace and mercy, entirely beyond the reach of human efforts, are at last miraculously found to be the only

“passport.” A heavenly humiliation sets in. “I am humble”—“I am low”—“I am dependent upon his mercy,” are the inner cries of the soul at this stage. God becomes the father. God becomes the mother. In fact God becomes all in all. Self is abandoned in favour of God, self is no longer trusted, self becomes null and void, and God now dwells where “I” was so long the master. “Come, Reveal Thyself,” “Speak” and so on, are the earnest speechless prayers of the afflicted seeker. He puts all the love attributes on God, raises Him above all and seeks him entreatingly, lovingly, passionately and madly. This is the positive side of the question. 3913

The whole soul is stirred up with an intense desire to know Him. Without Him, all is dark to the unfortunate, but the future fortunate, seeker. His heart cries in the humblest sincerity and the sincerest humility; and what else could be more acceptable to the Lord?

“The poor soul can no longer live without Me,” Let Me grant his humble prayers,” Let My grace descend on him,” “Let Me accept him,” vibrates the Divine Mind, and then with

the Divine liberality, the doors of knowledge are let open to the seeker with the divine call :—

Yā ayyatuhā 'l-nafsu 'l-mutma'innatu 'rjī'ī ilā rabbiki rādīyatan mardīyah fa'dkhlī 'ibādī wa'dkhlī jannatī.

“ O peaceful Heart, O restful Soul ! Return to thy Lord satisfied and accepted. Enter into the circle of my chosen ones and the Garden of the Blessed.”

The knowledge of Oneness begins with the awakening of intuition in respect of Nature. Each object presents to the internal eye a peculiar phase of the divine Existence. Varieties and differences in things, animals and men, in station of life, in tempers, thoughts, and feelings of persons, and so on, seem to represent one unbroken chain of divine Harmony, and far from distracting the human mind contribute considerably towards concentrating it by appearing to be the nucleus of one spiritual existence.

Here the student begins to know

- (1) That everything is the work of God.
- (2) That the attributes of all the objects, are in reality the attributes of God ; and

(3) That the existence of all the objects, is, in its essence, the existence of God

Spiritual rest and peace of mind and ever-increasing happiness are the attendants of these stages of spiritual growth. The soul begins to get a glimpse of its own true nature. A gradual unfolding of the Divine Intelligence takes place. This *coming out* brings the student face to face with the Blessed Oneness. He Knows It. The knowledge of Oneness extends so much that the knowledge of individual existences is completely superseded. Limitations vanish. One internal existence is known to act throughout. In one's own self as well as in everything else, one thread is seen to run as in a chaplet of beads or a garland of flowers.

The following advanced stages mark the complete knowledge of the Blessed Oneness:—

- (1) By virtue of His being latent in everything, God becomes visible in the self of man: and senses and reason become dim in the audience of Light. In this stage ejaculations of "I am high"—"I am—" are very often made by the student.

- (2) According to the text, *Allāhu nūr al-samāwati wa'l-ard*, "He is the Light of Heaven and Earth"—God is revealed to the sight of the student, with the result that he views all objects as one existence. Here, "All is God" becomes the dictate of the student's heart.
- (3) The mysteries of numbers and names become known and the student discovers the final play of one and the same vibration at the root of each.
- (4) God shines on the senses of the student.
Wa bi usmī'u wa bi absirū—he hears with Me, he sees with Me.
- (5) The student sees each individual object as God incarnate.
- (6) The actions of objects are seen to be the actions of God.
- (7) All darkness disappears and perfect Light becomes apparent. The student merges into the Light, and pain or pleasure ceases to produce any effect on him.
- (8) The existence of the student becomes lost in the existence of God, in the

same way as the light of the lamp becomes lost in the light of the sun.

- (9) The existence of all the objects is completely covered by the shadow of the Divine Light, so that the student cannot discern one from the other—To him all is, as it were, one mass of Divine Existence. A holy inactivity is very often the attendant of this state. When in this happy state the student freeing himself from the effects of the attributes of objects, merges into the depths of the Divine Light, and loses his identity, so to speak; a wave from the ocean of Oneness issues forth dashes against the whole interior self of the student, throwing him into the depths of what might be called the Unimaginable, the Indescribable. Here all opposites and attributes become redundant. Here is the threshold of the Realisation leading to the Truth. *Mun 'arafa nafsahu faqad 'arafa rabbahu*—"who so knoweth his self, knoweth God."

The state of the Realisation of Oneness, in which the knower and the knowledge, the object and the subject, are reduced to what may be termed One, although conveying no numerical meaning, is hardly within the province of description. Suffice it to say that, when by crossing the different points of "Towards God,"—"With God"—"In God" &c., the student reaches the spiritual realm of the Absolute, where there is neither addition nor subtraction, where he has reached "No where," although he has reached "somewhere," he finds himself exactly at the point where the soul in its true abstract nature reigned before incarnation. He is soul, he is knowledge, he is intelligence, he is happiness. Nor is this all: "he is," is no more to be asserted. "Absolute knowledge"—"Absolute bliss"—"Absolute eternity." The Koran alludes to this state in the following verse:—

Hal atá 'alá'l-insāni hīnun min al-dahri lam yakun shay'an madhkūra—"Has man realised that state when he was what could not be described?"

Having fully realised this happiest state of Divine existence, the master of Oneness, the

Muwahhid, now lives to lead a practical harmonised life. Having crossed all selfishness, he now lives entirely in purity and divine love, only caring for others, and ready to make any sacrifice, however great, in the service of humanity. Knowing now fully the mystery of life, and love, he becomes all life and love, and who could be more useful than he? Happy man! With this spirit acting, life is worth living, and death—if it means anything—is worth dying. Lived for God and died for God, is the best use that can be made of body.

Islam enjoins Realisation as the first condition of existence, the first vow of creation or incarnation, for without realisation, the usefulness of man, which marks his superiority over other creatures is incomplete. With knowledge and realisation Power is gained, and this smoothening the path of usefulness and service, completes the circuit of life and man is declared to have fulfilled his mission.

Innī jā'ilun fī'l-ardi khalīfah—"We have our representative on earth"—is worked up to. Man now truly represents God. Blessed are those who tread this path fearlessly

and persistently until they reach the Goal. In Islam, all beliefs and ceremonials, ablutions, prayers, fasting, pilgrimage and everything which comes under the category of "Religious Observances," are only intended to make man perfectly harmonised and useful. This can only be done with complete Resignation, which means Islam, and it is for this reason alone that the Koran holds up Resignation or Islam so high in the following verse :—

"Alḡawma akmallu lakum dīnakum wa atmamtu 'alaykum nī'matī wa radītu lakum al-Islama dīna."

"This day We have made your path complete, and have completed Our blessings on you, and have ordained Resignation or Islam as your religion."

In Islam there are sects and fraternities which advance the students towards the Realisation of Oneness according to the particular ways inaugurated by their founders, all based on practical experience. These several ways only nominally differ from each other, but all are in accord with the teachings of the Koran. The stages of arriving at the Realisation of Oneness, already described in this essay, are by no means, the

only stages. The following information gathered from the teachings of some of the well organised spiritual fraternities might be interesting to the reader :

According to one account, Oneness is of several kinds :

- (1) *Oneness of action.*—*i. e.*, to attribute all actions, however varied in their nature, to God. “*Qul kullun min ‘indi ‘llāh*”—“Say everything is from God.”
- (2) *Oneness of attributes.*—*i. e.*, Beholding Oneness and Harmony in the different attributes.
- (3) *Abstract Oneness.*—*i. e.*, Realisation of Absolute Oneness, as devoid of “Actions” and “Attributes.”

According to another account, Oneness has the following four stages :

- (1) *Faith of Oneness.*—*i. e.*, to believe and acknowledge that according to the dictates of the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet, God is one in all His attributes and He is alone to be worshipped.
- (2) *Knowledge of Oneness.*—*i. e.*, to know from an internal conviction that God has eternal existence. He is the only Force

in the Universe. All the actions, attributes and existences, in reality rest in the actions, attributes and existence of One God. Wherever there is knowledge, power, will, sight &c., &c., they are all the shades of the similar attributes of One God.

- (3) *Enjoyment of Oneness.*—i. e., In the enjoyment of the audience of God, to lose sight of One's own individual existence, so much so that Oneness should seem to be the attribute of the "One" and not of the seer. Further this act of discerning Oneness as the attribute of one, may also seem to be the attribute of that same One.
- (4) *Final Oneness.*—i. e., according to the text, *kāna 'llāhu wa lam yakun ma'a'ahu shay'un wa 'l-āna kamā kāna.*—"Was God, and there was nothing with Him, and he is now what He was then." Also, *Kullu shay'-in hālīkun illā wajhahu.*—"Nothing but the audience of His Light shall endure"—to realise that God, by virtue of His being Eternal, has been ceaselessly One and Singular and shall

ever remain so. The individual existence of objects is dead and nil, in the existence of God, and so on.

Oneness of Involution and Evolution has also been described in this way. The Eternal existence has two phases. One is the involved existence and the other the evolved. The involved existence is like Spirit or Light, and all the apparent or evolved existences are but the reflections of the latent involved existence. Varieties, attributes, and actions, current in the Universe, owe their origin to the internal reality and that same oneness is expressed in all these varieties, like the ocean is expressed in the different waves. In short all the individual existences are the reflections and expressions of the one Eternal Existence.

Al-haqqu mahsūsun wal-khalqu ma'qūlun.

“God is involved and the Universe is evolved.”

The different stages of arriving at the realisation of Oneness, are practically worked out by the student under instructions and with the aid of the spiritual teacher.

III.

THE PERSONALITIES.

The Realisation of Oneness being the goal of Islam, all those who have preached Oneness and helped mankind towards attaining to this Happy End, are regarded as the benefactors of humanity and are approached in thought and words, with the highest respect and profoundest devotion. Muslims believe that at all times and in all countries, there have lived such benefactors or prophets leading mankind Godwards, diffusing joy and peace and minimising pain and suffering. From Adam, Noah, Sri Krishna and Zarathustra to Abraham, Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad, there is one unbroken chain of these Divine personages, the benefactors of mankind, the Representatives of God on earth. Each of these preached and taught the Truth according to the needs of the times and of

those among whom they lived, and it is for this reason that the Qur-ān emphatically declares, *Lā nufarriqa bayna ahadin min rusulih*—"We make no difference between any of them." (2, 136).

All are great; all are godly, all are true. Each is believed to have a peculiar divine attribute. For instance, Abraham is called *Khalīlu'llāh*—the Friend of God, Moses, *Kalīm-u'llāh*—the Converser with God, Jesus, *Rūhu'l-lāh*—the Spirit of God. The divine revelations expressed in words, or the scriptures as promulgated by the prophets, are held to be sacred and as having fulfilled their divine mission. Mothers of prophets (particularly Mary), the friends, companions and associates, (male and female), of the prophets are highly respected.

Coming to the Islamic personalities of which Muhammad is the head, we find that due honour and respect is paid to all those (from the Prophet to one's own Spiritual guide) who have contributed more or less towards advancing the Muslim in the Realisation of Oneness. Each Spiritual fraternity has a genealogical tree in which from the Prophet down to the last living Sheikh are linked all those who themselves realised Oneness and

also helped others to it. All of them are highly respected, their spiritual deeds are remembered and honoured, their precepts faithfully adhered to and their examples closely followed. The Holy Koran introduces the Prophet in the following terms—*Arsalnā jīkum rasūlan minkum yallū ‘alaykum āyātina wa yuzakkīkum wa yu‘allimukumu ‘l-kitāba wa ‘l-hikmata wa yu‘allimukum mā lam takūnū ta‘lamūn.*—“We have sent you a prophet from among yourselves, who teaches you Our Will and purifies you and teaches you knowledge and wisdom and teaches you what you did not know” (2, 151).—

Wa mā ‘alā ‘l-rasūli illā ‘l-balāgh—It is the duty of the Prophets to transmit knowledge (7, 102).—

Laqad jā‘akum rasūlun min anfusikum ‘azīzun ‘alayhi mā ‘anittum harīsun ‘alaykum bi‘l-minūminīna—“To you has come a prophet from among you, cannot suffer you to remain in darkness, is anxious that you should see Light, is exceedingly kind to the believers— (9, 128).

The Prophet’s sayings and oral instructions are called Hadīth. They are contained in six books compiled by different persons at different

times. Next to the Koran in spiritual worth, stand these sacred books of Hadīth. They also contain accounts given by those who lived with or knew the Prophet, as to how he acted on certain occasions and what answers and instructions he gave when questioned by his people. A few specimen Hadīth are given here :—

Wa 'an 'Uthmāna qāla qāla rasūlu'llāhi salla'llāhu 'alayhi wa sallama man mātu wa nuwa ya'lamu annahu lā ilāha illā'llāhu dakhala'l-jannata—Rawā hu Muslim.

'Uthmān (one of the four great companions of the Prophet) states that the Prophet (Peace and blessings on him) said, "whoso dieth believing firmly that there is no other to be worshipped but God, will enjoy eternal bliss"—Quoted by Muslim (the compiler of one of the books of Hadīth).

From the book of al-Bukhāri (another compiler) the following sayings of the Prophet are taken—*Kāna'llāhu wa lam yakun mu'ahu shay'un wa'l-āna kamā kāna*—"God existed and there was nothing with Him and He is now what He was then."

Mafātīḥu'l-jannati shahādatu an lā ilāha illā'llāhu,—The Key to the heavenly Bliss, is the conception of God's unity.

The instructions imparted in the Hadith are natural and simple and always exceedingly practical. It may be said that many philosophical discussions on the question of Oneness, which have been so minutely gone into by the early thinkers of India, have been apparently left untouched in the scriptures of the Muslims, but it should be distinctly remembered that a line has been very judiciously drawn in Islam between the subjects to be generally and publicly preached and those to be confided to the deserving, advanced and chosen few. Almost all the finer instructions as to the Realisation of self are embodied in what is called the '*Ilm-i-Sīnah*—the knowledge to be kept within the breast—as distinct from the '*Ilm-i-Safīnah*—the knowledge promulgated in books. The instructions of '*Ilm-i-Sīnah* are imparted to the student by the Sheikh and are regarded as a sacred Trust. During the last few centuries, however, some such instructions have been put down in writing and are called *malfuzāt*—"Sayings of Saints"—and contain valuable stores of real

Islamic thought. The peculiarity of reserving the finer instructions in the manner indicated has at least served one purpose. It has made the general instructions of Islam much more practical than would have been the case, had the *Fine* been mixed with the *Gross*, the esoteric with the exoteric. This has been the chief distinction in Islam. The Koran and Hadith clearly point out the Goal, lay down all preparatory instructions for cleanliness, morality, sociality and spirituality, but the finer instructions for quickening the intuition, and the realisation of God, were confided secretly and "from Heart to Heart" by the Prophet to his chosen friends. The most prominent of them were :—

1. Abū Bakr al-Siddiq.
2. 'Umar b. al-Khattāb.
3. 'Uthmān b. 'Affān.
4. 'Alī b. Abi Tālib.

'Alī, specially distinguished himself in spiritual matters, and is the head of three of the four organised Spiritual Fraternities of Saints. Ali was a cousin and also the son-in-law of Muhammad. The daughter of the Prophet named Fātimah, who is regarded as the model of Muslim womanhood, was married to 'Alī.

They had two sons, Hasan and Husayn. The latter with his friends and little children was martyred in Karbala in defence of religion.

A specimen of 'Ali's instructions to his elder son, Hasan, might be repeated here with advantage,

“ *Ya bunayya fikruka fika yakfika dā'un wa dawā'un fika anta jismun saghīrun wa fika 'ālamun kabīrun anta Umm al-Kitāb.*”

“ O my son ! Thine own meditation within thyself is quite sufficient for thee ; both the disease and the remedy are within thine ownself ; thou art a small body, but within thee, there is a vast universe. Thou art the Mother of the Book.”

Fixed methods of meditations, traced to 'Ali and the Prophet's instructions are imparted to students. It is generally known that the Prophet held his secret meditations in a certain cave called *Hirā*.

The great organised Spiritual Fraternities are four:—

1. Qādiriyah.
2. Chishtiyah.
3. Naqshbandiyah.
4. Subrawardiyah.

The Qādiriyah fraternity owes its name to the Sheikh 'Abd-al-Qādir al-Jilānī whose remains are at Bagdad. He is highly revered by all the fraternities and his works on spiritual growth and development are remarkable.

The most famous saints of the Chishtiyah fraternity are :—

Mu'in al-dīn (Tomb at Ajmere, India).

Farīd al-dīn (do. at Ajodhun, Punjab).

Kutub al-dīn (do. at Delhi, the Kutub Minar).

Nizām al-dīn (do. at Delhi).

'Alī Ahmad Sābir (do. at Kalyar near Roorkee).

Nasir al-dīn, *Chirāgh-i Chisht*, or the Light of the House of Chisht (Delhi).

The sayings of all these saints have been compiled and thousands benefit by the spiritual instructions contained in them.

The jewel of the Naqshbandiyah fraternity is Khwajah Bahā 'al-dīn Naqshband ;—that of the Suhrawardiyah fraternity, the Sheikh Shihāb al-dīn 'Umar Suhrawardy. The Qādiriyah fraternity is noted for training the students of an energetic nature ; the Chishtiyah for emotional students, the Naqshbandiyah for mystics ; and the Suhrawardiyah for thinkers and men of

contemplative nature. Good work, Pure Love, Meditation and Renunciation are the particular attributes of these respective fraternities.

Going back to Muhammad, the founder of the Religion, it will be our happy task to trace and explain his spiritual importance to his followers. To begin with, he is not worshipped as God, nor is he from a personal point of view in any literal sense the medium for approaching God. He revealed to us the will of God, taught us by example and precept how to lead a pure, godly life and last, though not the least, he inculcated the Realisation of the Supreme Being. He lived in the midst of great disadvantages as will be seen from the accounts of his career given by secular writers. He lived amongst idolators and people sunk in barbarism—but he emphatically and fearlessly taught them the existence and unity of God, mitigated and modified to the extent possible the moral, social and spiritual evils of his times and gave them a code whereby they could mould and regulate their lives to suit the will of God. His teachings are the outcome of pure divine inspiration. *Wa mā yantiqu 'ani 'l-hawá.*—“And he speaketh not of his own will and desire.”

In the highest state of his communion with God, when entirely at one with Him,—in the state of “divine inspiration,” he revealed and transmitted to his people the will of God—the Koran—the first sacred Scriptures of the Muslims. People who watched him during his hours of Inspiration, admitted that he underwent a heavenly change and could not speak but the Divine will. At other times he would give counsel to his people on moral, social and spiritual matters, admit that he was a mortal like them and dependent upon the Grace of God, and then he would enjoin on all purity of life and resorting to God and God alone for whatever they wanted. With the Koran as his life and soul, and the spiritual Muhammad as his Light and Guide, the Mussalman devotedly and lovingly under the proper care and direction of his Pīr, Sheikh, Murshid, or Guide traverses the path of Realisation, revering every thing that is good and great and edifying Truth in all Its phases. The general and miscellaneous sacred literature of Islam has been compiled, and differences and diversities settled and decided upon, by the following four professors and masters of learning:—

1. Abū Hanīfah. 2. Al-Shāfi'ī. 3. Mālik.
4. Ibn Hanbal.

They are regarded as the head of their respective Schools and their followers styled Hanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī and Hanbalī, after the names of the founders of their respective Schools, perform their religious duties in the manners advocated by them. There is no material difference in the teachings of these doctors. Nominal difference however exists as to certain forms of prayers rituals and ceremonies and that is all. These schools train up the student in the preliminary or "Shari'at" discipline, and when he is fit to advance in the spiritual path he has to join one of the four great spiritual fraternities described in this essay for his spiritual development and the Realisation of self—which is the Goal of Islam.

The world of Islam is divided into two sects—the Sunni and the Shī'ah.

So far we have described the attitude of the Sunni Sect towards the personalities of Islam. The Shī'ah sect stands thus in relation to the personalities :—

1. Muhammad, the true Prophet.

2. Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet and "the Crown of Womanhood."

3. 'Alī (the cousin of Muhammad and his son-in-law) the only true representative of the Prophet. He is called Walī or Imām (the representative) and the Shi'ahs believe that like a prophet an Imām is also specially gifted by divine grace and is like the Prophet innocent and free from errors and sins.

4. Hasan (the eldest son of 'Alī and Fātimah).

5. Husayn (the younger brother of Hasan).

6. 'Alī Zayn-al-'Ābidīn (son of Husayn).

7. Muhammad al-Bāqir (son of Zayn-al-'Ābidīn).

8. Ja-'far al-Sādiq (son of al-Bāqir).

9. Mūsā 'l-Kāzīm (son of Ja'far),

10. 'Alī al-Ridā (son of al-Kāzīm).

11. Muhammad al-Taqī (son of al-Ridā).

12. 'Alī al-Naqī (son of al-Taqī).

13. Hasan al-'Askarī (son of al-Naqī).

14. Muhammad al-Mahdi (son of al-Askarī).

From 'Alī (No. 2, in the list) down to al-Mahdi, the twelve holy persons are all called Imāms and all are considered to be sinless. The Shi'ahs too, like the Sunnis, believe in the Holy

Koran and in Muhammad as the prophet; but they believe in the twelve Imāms as the only true representatives of God and the prophet. These twelve Imāms with the Prophet and his daughter are collectively styled *ahl al-bayt* "the people of the House". Commentaries on the Koran as written or given out by these Imāms, and Hadith as collected or described by them are alone acknowledged and no religious information coming from any other sources are accepted. The Shī'ahs have no separate spiritual fraternities like the Sunnis but their Mujtahid is the combined teacher of spiritual and secular Islam. The spiritual teachings of Shī'ahism, chiefly consist in freeing the student from all impurities of thought and action, promoting holiness by communion with God through prayers, charity and acts of virtue, and last, though not the least, in promoting spiritual love with the *ahl al-bayt*, "people of the House"—the latter are the only models to copy and follow. The example of Husayn, the martyr, who for the sake of Truth suffered the most cruel persecutions and death along with his children (Zayn-al-ʿĀbidīn alone surviving) and cousins and friends in Karbala,

stands prominent in the hearts of the Shi'ahs. Meetings are held and recitations are made describing how Husayn and his allies in Karbala suffered in the name of truth. The result is that the Shi'ah, being all love and purity, is harmonised without any other effort and he realises the Oneness rather imperceptibly.

It may be remarked that the Sunnis too recognize the twelve Imāms but they do not confine themselves exclusively to their teachings. They follow the teachings of the Koran and the Hadīth from whatever sources they may come, and have special instructions in their spiritual fraternities for spiritual development.

That he should live the life of purity and peace and realise the Oneness, is, however, the earnest prayer of every true Mussulman, be he a Sunni or a Shi'ah.

IV.

THE FIVE PILLARS.

Again, the realisation of Oneness being the goal of Islam, "actions" are encouraged or discouraged according as they further or retard the progress of mankind towards the Desired End. Those acts that have been encouraged are called the Pillars of Faith, on which rests the whole mansion of Islam. They have been so built up as to slowly but surely break the student into Harmony and Peace, the surest and the safest pathways to the Realisation of Self.

Spiritual evolution being the act of internal discipline, the Pillars of Faith are so organised as to leave no room for the student to go astray, but on the other hand to control him and keep him within such limits as are best

calculated to discover the Light, to realise Oneness

The five pillars of the Faith of Islam are :—

1. Belief in the unity of God and the acknowledgment of Muhammad and his predecessors as the inspired messengers of God.

2. Prayer.

3. Charity.

4. Pilgrimage.

5. Fasting.

It will be observed that the foundation of the Religion of Islam is the Unity of God, a subject which has already been discussed at some length in the essay on "The Blessed Oneness" and therefore needs no further demonstration. Suffice it to say here that the student in Islam, in the spiritual path, begins with the belief in the Unity of God, and Prayer, Charity, Pilgrimage and Fasting are the practical means whereby he is enabled to carry that belief into practical effect, that is, to realise the Unity of God. The spiritual significance of these "actions" is in proportion to the help they render the student in the realisation of God, and truly does "Prayer" rank first.

Prayer is in a sense to be "in communion" with God. It is a spiritual luxury.

Bodily cleanliness or ablution is an implied condition of, and an essential preliminary to Prayer. In its primary stage, prayer means the measuring of the distance which lies between the student and God, or, in other words, how far he is behind the mark, in the discovery of the Light. In this stage of prayer the barriers in the way, which in the estimation of the student separate him from God are found out and intuition is made to develop to such an extent as to foster the necessary strength to cross those barriers. This done, the actual prayer means the throwing of the whole heart into the Fountainhead, to become lost in the Audience of Light, and then to recover consciousness, as it were victorious and successful, blessed and elevated, when naturally the speechless ejaculation from the innermost recess of the heart would be "*al-hamdu li'llāhi rabbi'l-ālamīn*"—"All praise is for the God of the worlds."

Prayer begins with man as he is and ends with God as He is, or in other words, it begins with what is the outcome of the individual thought and ends with what is the Universal Reality.

In the Holy Koran, prayer has been enjoined, as the most important of all the acts of religion, and although real prayer having as it does for its seat the internal self of man, needs no outer forms, much less fixed times, yet in the interest of spiritual discipline and to serve as a practical means of getting into the habit of calling the “prayer” faculty of the mind into play, certain fixed forms and stated hours have been judiciously ordained.

. With the beginner, of course, prayer is a duty imposed from outside, but those who have trodden the path of religion with that amount of earnestness which is necessary for the Realisation of God, know well that prayer far from being such an act of duty, is on the other hand, a spiritual blessing, in as much as it represents the real spiritual state of the student and is the best means of expressing the Divinity within, and as such, is the most worthy of encouragement. For instance, in the fixed prayers of the Mussulmans a piece from the Koran is invariably repeated. It opens with the verse quoted above, *viz.*,—“All praise is for the Lord of the worlds.” Now although the outer instructions of religion enjoin

that when a Mussulman should say his prayers, he must repeat this verse, yet the real intention of religion is that the student should so fully realise the Beauteous Self, and so completely enjoy the Glories of Light, that a feeling of satisfaction so natural after such a mighty victory, must set in, resulting in the mark of approbation "It is all praiseworthy." Whatever the student has seen or realised, if he has seen and realised what he ought to have, could only be expressed in terms of praise or approbation, and this is why our prayers, representing our spiritual state, must begin with praises of the Almighty. But it must always be borne in mind that prayer with or without words, should be the voice of our true nature, and not that it will dictate terms to the Soul. The merit of a prayerful mind is on the one hand total Abnegation or Resignation, and on the other, that purity which is only godly. Resignation paving the way for spiritual advancement, and purity crossing the barriers of separateness, they both bring the seeker face to face with the Self, the whole process being governed by prayer.

Resignation and purity are the two (negative and positive) essential qualities of a prayerful mind. Resignation is manly. Purity is godly. Prayer is nothing but a link between the two attributes of one and the same Glorious self. Prayer is more or less an interpreter between man and God: man speaks to God through prayer.

The Koran holds that prayer drives away all wicked and evil thoughts—*inna 'l-salāta tanhá 'ani 'l-fahshā'i wa'l-munkar*. Here Resignation is meant which is the most essential feature of Prayer. Without Resignation no one can ever hope to be prayerful. It is surely the most important part of prayer.

If we were to trace the process of spiritual development in man, what could be more suggestive than the following verse of the Holy Koran :

Yūminūna bi'l-ghaybi wa yuqīmūna'l-salāta wa mim mā razzaqūhum yunfiqūn.

—“They have faith in the Unseen and offer prayer and give away out of what is given unto them”—

The whole process represents one mass of the spiritual evolution and *Faith, Prayer* and

Charity are respectively the first, the intermediate and the final stages. You, at first, get the *intelligence* of the existence of Divinity and have faith in it. Naturally the desire to know it and how to know it ensues. You then act, or, in other words, pray. Finally when you have known it and are harmonised with it, you, no longer recognising and upholding your individual, separate existence, share with others, all that has in one sense, been yours hitherto. You become charitable. Charity here is not a means to some end, or an act to obtain corresponding fruition, but is purely the outcome of the harmonised and successful soul. It is the evidence of your having gained the desired object. Once becoming full, and knowing the secret that the store will in no way be depleted by giving away, which in a way only means airing it out, you can only remain satisfied by being charitable. After realising the sameness and oneness of Soul-existence, after receiving the satisfaction of having gained what was worth gaining, in what other employment can the remaining days of earthly life be best spent than in imparting and disseminating knowledge, giving, and bestowing peace and comfort.

One more simple idea is in favour of charity being the outcome of the successful state. It is this that you wanted Him and have got Him ; natural enough that you should make all sacrifices in your power, in honor of, and in thanksgiving for, your success. In this view, charity will not make you the knower, but that knowledge will make you charitable. This is the ideal of charity. Besides it helps immensely to cross selfishness and is all the more valuable for it.

The Koran says, *Lan tanālū 'l-bisra hattā tunfiqū mim mā tukibbūn*—Thou shalt never attain unto righteousness, unless thou givest out of what thou lovest.—So charity implies the best sacrifice in one's power. Here again, Resignation enters, as the essential preliminary to, and forerunner of, charity. How can the best sacrifice in one's power be possibly made without total resignation. Without it, as we have already seen, prayer is incomplete. Without it charity is also defective. In fact Resignation—which is the English word for Islam—is the stepping stone to religion, and spiritual advancement and entirely depends on the degree of resignation we have attained to.

The practical teachings in Islam, to make the student *faithful*, *prayerful*, and *charitable*, begin with divesting him of all impurities of thought and action. A list of *Nawāhī* or "prohibitions" is at once placed in the hands of the student. Belief in more than one God, worshipping more than one God, and depending on any one else than God, are strongly denounced. Physical suggestions, or pictures and idols are condemned as diverting the attention of the student from the Non-physical, Non-material Essence or God, and our places of worship are therefore always without such suggestions.

Then come the "prohibitions" for the regulation of moral and social conduct which are too numerous to detail. No pains have been spared, even such food and drink which mar the spiritual growth and upset the spiritual equilibrium of the student are expressly indicated. For instance, all intoxicants, especially wine, and all inflaming meats, especially pork, have been forbidden.

While, on the one hand, all such impurities are condemned and the student is taught to abstain from them, on the other, holy verses

(called *kalimahs*—the opening verse being, *Lā ilāha illā 'llāh wa Muhammad al-rasūlu 'llāh*.—There is no God but One and Muhammad is His Prophet) which deal exhaustively with the truest belief in the Unity of God, are inculcated, and the fixed forms of prayer taught. The beginner is thus placed in direct communication with God. The first condition of prayer is

Lā salāta illā bi-hudūri'l-qalbi—"There is no prayer, unless the heart is present."

The student is required to throw all his heart into the Holy Presence.

Ka'annaka tarāhu

—"As if thou seest Him."—

Ordinarily, we pray five times in 24 hours; before sunrise, at noon, afternoon, sunset, bedtime. Morning and night prayers are rather long, the others short. We pray standing and sitting, the most conspicuous feature being kneeling down and bowing and placing the forehead on the ground. These postures have been so arranged as not to tire one, however prolonged the course of prayers may be. When we pray in congregation, (and we are required to do so as much as possible) one of the congregation leads the prayer and

stands in front and behind him rows are formed. A portion of the Koran is read aloud by him and listened to by others while other portions are repeated in silence by all, the whole course being undergone in different postures. After the fixed course is over and it ends in a sitting posture, we raise our hands and approach God, as heartfully as we can, thank him for what we are, and ask forgiveness for what is still wanting in us.

All this is the ordinary course of prayers as taught to beginners, and in the interest of discipline, all Mussulmans are required to observe it. Then come private prayers for advanced students, course of meditations, searching the whole internal Self and all that is necessary, for the discovery of Light and the Realisation of Self. For these finer instructions to the advanced student, the personal tutorship of the Saint (Pir, Murshid) or Guide is essential. The initiation is called "*Bay'at*" or taking the oath of allegiance. The disciple takes the oath of allegiance to God through the spiritual Guide. What a happy moment! When the teacher placing the hands of the disciple in his own in the Oriental

way, repeats the holy verse from the Koran,

Yadu'llahi fawqa aydihim.—"God's hand is above their hands"—a holy silence ensues and here very often the intuition of the disciple is quickened by the personal, spiritual influence of the Teacher.

Next, we shall try to see what part the pilgrimage and fasting play in the spiritual discipline of a Mussulman. Mecca (in Arabia) where the foundation-stone of Islam was laid and Medina (also in Arabia) where Muhammad spent his later years and where he lies buried are the places of pilgrimage for the Muslims. Every Mussulman, in whatever quarter of the globe, whose financial circumstances admit of it, is required to pay a visit to these holy places at least once in life. At a stated time each year Mussulmans from all quarters of the world resort to these places and offer divine prayers and perform certain rituals and ceremonies, in the memory and name of some of the prophets of Arabia (Abraham, Ishmael and Muhammad). One great peculiarity, and indeed a great, practical lesson to establish universal brotherhood is, on these occasion of pilgrimage, the

uniform simple unsewn garments worn by all alike during the whole course of pilgrimage. The rich and the poor all appear in one and the same simple dress and offer divine prayers and perform religious ceremonies in congregation, without any distinction whatever. In fact it is not possible to distinguish a rich man from a poor man on these occasions. The primary idea of pilgrimage is to withdraw one from the busy worldly life for a short time and to teach one the practical lessons of unity and universal brotherhood, the valuable fruits of a "Realised" life. As has been shewn before, pilgrimage is the fourth pillar of religion and comes in order, after Faith, Prayer and Charity. The prayerful and charitable believer learns in pilgrimage the further essential practical lessons of unity and universal brotherhood and reaching towards perfection, learns the real mysteries of universal existence, which latter is no other than God. These practical lessons could have only been best taught if persons from all countries and of all ranks and positions were brought together at the "centre" of religion, which was the home

of the Realisation of God, and this is actually done even to-day at Mecca. Wherever, Islam gives a theory it is always careful to adopt the requisite practical measures to work it out also, and pilgrimage is one of the greatest of these practical measures. From the moment, the Muslim resolves upon going on this pilgrimage he seems to undergo a heavenly change. He is separated for a time from home and all his worldly connections, foregoes much of his comfort and convenience, and spends his time in holy seclusion on the one hand, and pure universality on the other, relishing at each step the fruits of a harmonised life. He learns to withdraw from the world of individual connections and to live in the world of universal brotherhood. The object is that at the end of the pilgrimage when the Muslims disperse and go back to their different countries, they should try to live the same harmonised life that they have seen in the pilgrimage. Realisation of Oneness, however, practical in its character, can still further be practicalised and in fact reaches its highest limits, only

when a harmonised life is actually and universally led in the world. This has all along been the chief distinction in Islam, which has very boldly discouraged the life of a recluse. "Live in the world, as you should live in God," is the motto of Islam and all practical lessons contributing to this end are taught. If you were to be taught and accustomed to eat in God, drink in God, talk and walk in God, and in fact do everything in God, what could have been more godly than so living in the world, and any advice to the effect that you should withdraw from the world and lead the life of a recluse is by no means a godly advice. If you have acquired the blessings of existence and realised the object of life, it is only fair that you should *live* them and not that you should retire to a cave and rest in self-enjoyment, for the latter, however pure and godly, is after all a kind of selfishness ; even though "spiritual selfishness."

Fasting is the discipline administered by means of keeping the body under certain restraints of eating, drinking, talking &c. &c. Self-control and moderation are the two guiding principles of fasting. The physical is subdued, in order to raise and elevate the spiritual,

The man of want is transformed into the angel of wantlessness for a time. For a full lunar month in a year (the month of Ramadān is fixed for the purpose) the Mussulmans ordinarily fast. The fasting commences from before sunrise till sunset. During the day-time eating, drinking, all kinds of physical indulgences, all excesses of fashion and gay life are strictly forbidden. Greater portion of the night is reserved for special prayers, in which the whole of the Koran is recited throughout the month. Every Mussulman who is physically capable of doing so, is required to undergo the fasting discipline during the month of Ramadān. It is regarded as the month of great purity and holiness, and the hurry and bustle of the busy worldly life is considerably lessened to a Mussulman during this month. Charity is made the special act of virtue during this month, and as much as possible, a pure angelic life is led by every Mussulman. One great advantage of selecting the lunar month, for the discipline of fasting is that it comes in all seasons of the year, and the person fasting, in course of a few years, gets accustomed to fast and control himself in all seasons alike and is master of

himself in any climate or season. Besides these regular fasts of Ramadān, there are additional and stricter fasts for advanced students, prescribed by the Teacher. There are fraternities in which daily fastings of a more rigid nature are continued for years together by the advanced students, who devote much of their time, while fasting, to meditation and carrying out the special spiritual instructions of the Teacher. Fasting which is only another name for moderation of all kinds, is one of the greatest means of quickening the intuition and when in conjunction with fasting, the fixed hours of the five prayers of the day are considered, especially those of morning and evening prayers, it is to be admitted in fairness to the organisation of Islam, that all possible means of uniting man to God, or the discovery of Light, have been devised and man has been fully equipped with the requisite means to tread the path of religion fearlessly and satisfactorily, until he becomes harmonised and enlightened, which is the Goal.

The five pillars of religion specified above, on which, from a practical point of view, the whole mansion of Islam rests, make a man

(1) faithful (2) prayerful (3) charitable

(4) universal (altruistic) and (5) moderate and are therefore ordained in the interest of humanity, as the injunctions of religion, and universal discipline. Detailed rules in each branch of discipline have been framed in the plainest possible terms, and no pains have been spared to make the path of God as smooth as can possibly be. Human nature has neither been ignored, nor abhorred, but on the other hand, is shown due consideration and is given its proper place in the transaction between man and God; or, in other words, between crossing the physical and realising the spiritual.

The generality of mankind wants, easy, natural and practical methods of solving the mysteries of life, and the realisation of God, and as has been shown briefly, Islam has done its best to supply this general want. After, then furnishing all this data, and after thus fully enlightening the path of man, the Koran boldly announces—

*Al-yawma akmalu lakum dinakum wa atmamtu
‘alaykum ni‘mati wa raditu lakum al-Islama dina.*

—“This day We have completed your course and have given you our blessings in full, and

have chosen for your course of life, the Religion of Islam."—

V.
FROM THE CRADLE TO THE
GRAVE.

—: o :—

We ask the reader to follow us to an average Mussulman house, where the first cries of a newly-born babe have just been heard. The midwife has just finished her task and placed the child in the arms of some elderly woman seated by the side of the mother. All is calm and heavenly. A holy person enters the room, sits by the child and in a low voice repeats the following in both the ears of the one who has just entered the world :

All āhu Akbar—God is Great.

Allāhu Akbar—God is Great.

The same twice more.

Ash-hadu an lā ilāha I confess that there
illā'llāh. is no object of wor-

(Twice repeated). ship but God
Ash-hadu anna Mu- I confess that Muham-
hammad al-rasūl- mad is God's Mes-
u'llāh. senger.

(Twice repeated).

Hayyi 'alā 'l-salāh. Hasten to prayer, to

(Twice repeated). worship.

Hayyi 'alā 'l-falāh. Hasten to righteousness,

(Twice repeated). to prosperity.

Al-salātu khayrun mina Prayer is better than
'l-nawm. sleep.

Al-salātu khayru Prayer is the best of
'l-'amal. deeds.

Allāhu Akbar. God is Great.

(Twice repeated). There is no object of
Lā ilāha illā'llāh. worship but God.

The idea is that the first voice that should go into the ears of the new guest should contain the announcement of God's glory. While this is repeated a holy silence prevails among those present, and it seems that man is united with God. Generally no astronomical calculations are made, no horoscope prepared; enough that the words of God are inculcated and the foundation stone of a godly life laid. Even the casual observer cannot fail to recognise that

the idea of ushering the child into the world with words of purity, prayer and God's worship, is simply divine. In later life, when young men are sometimes seen to deviate from the path of God, preachers and religious advisers, not uncommonly appeal to this ceremony, and instances are not wanting when this has touched the heart of the listener and brought him back to God. Audiences have been often moved to tears when appeals have been made to them to save destitute Mussulman children from the sway of ungodly persons, by the mere mention of this ceremony. No Mussulman child is born to whom these holy words are not administered. When the child cries and it is sought, to quiet it the attendant generally takes it in his arms and repeats the word "Allāh," God. This is almost invariably done even at the time of caressing the child or giving it the breast. The idea is that the child should grow with words about God inspired into it. Children who can understand a bit, are generally encouraged to be good, by promises of God's approval of their acts and told that if they did wrong, God would be displeased with them. When the child is a week

old, its head is shaved and sacrifices are made in the name of God, the great peculiarity being that holy words are also whispered into the ears of the animal to be sacrificed. The hair of the child is weighed and an equal quantity of silver or gold is given in alms to the poor in the name of God. When the child is about four years and a half, it is expected to commence learning the alphabet. A beautiful ceremony then takes place. The very name is divine. It is called *Bismillāh* meaning "In the name of God." Friends and relatives are invited and feasted, the child is dressed, for the occasion and the teacher asks him or her to repeat the words *Bismillāhi 'l-rahmāni 'l-rahīm*, "I begin in the name of God, who is loving and merciful." A piece from the Koran specially selected for the purpose is then read by the child with the teacher, alms are distributed to the poor in the name of God, and the child is declared to have commenced going to school. Even in countries where Arabic is not the mother tongue, at least a portion of the Koran is learnt by heart by the child, before entering on other studies. The intention is that at least in the first years,

the child should have in some way or other God's words always before him. When seven years of age, prayers, as enumerated in the essay on the Five Pillars, become a part of the child's instructions and at the age of ten, the full discipline as regards ablutions, postures, prayers, times etc., is enforced. This holds equally good with boys and girls. Later on the discipline of fasting is administered, and the month's fasts in Ramadān each year become compulsory, at the age of 15 or so. We thus train the child in the ordinary discipline of religion, however mechanical in its character, leaving the meaning and beauties to be worked by her or him when of age. Every endeavour is made to make the average Mussulman house, a home of love and religious discipline, and our ladies are generally very good disciplinarians in this respect.

When the Muslim is of age, and enters the world, married life generally commencing at this stage, he becomes along with his wife, a responsible house-holder, and they both are supposed to have commenced a life of peace and harmony in relation to god and the world. All the observances of religion are equally com-

pulsory on both. Fortunately they find themselves armed with detailed instructions as to how their new life should be led. The religious books clearly state the rules, which should govern their ways of life. All such instructions have been very carefully codified, the guiding principle being that of individual responsibility, both in relation to God and man. The warning contained in the following words of the Koran is at once impressed on the mind of the Muslim, when entering into the world.

Yā ayyuhā 'lladhīna āmanū lā tulhikum amwālukum wa lā awlādukum 'an dhikri'llāh—“O believers ! your worldly goods and children must never make you forget God.”

The marriage is solemnised with the parties accepting to undertake the duties of married life as enjoined by religion, with the declaration of having accepted religion as the guide in life and purity, the fellow-companion. The words *Ḥaslanī mumayyizān bayna 'l-halāli wa 'l-harāmi* are mentioned, which mean that marriage is a clear boundary between purity and impurity, that married life in its nature is such as should be valued.

The Muslim marriage has no significance beyond the fact that man and woman come together to serve the cause of the world and to promote the welfare and harmony of existence with their joint effort. If they fail to do this, they can be dis-united by order of religion. The Mussulman knows that however he or she may love each other in their worldly union (they are quite welcome, in fact encouraged in every way, to do this), but the first place in the heart must be reserved for God. Neglect in following the path of God, is not to be excused on the plea of a busy worldly life or love of wife or husband. The mission of life is to realise Oneness, to be practically harmonised and worldly life and marriage are only to contribute to this end. If an average Mussalman household fails to show a golden thread of godliness running through it, it is decidedly a failure.

Our salutation is *al-salāmu ‘alaykum*,—"Peace be on you." The reply is also the same. Our response to "How do you do" is *‘al-hamdu li’llāh*—"All praise is for God," as distinct from "thank you" and so on. The Mussulman strives almost at each step to advance the God and keep back the Man as much as possible. In

the sayings of the Prophet, marriage is described as one half of religion and the married couple are enjoined to complete the remaining half by following the straight path of God. It is also said that those who want to see God should be purified by marriage. Marriage has been regarded as the symbol of purity and as such the stepping stone to the realisation of God. Although married life has been praised and encouraged throughout the teachings of the Prophet, yet it has been very clearly and expressly stated that it is not the goal but only a means to purity and peace, the essentials for the realisation of God, which is the true goal of Islam.

In earning his livelihood and in dealing with the world generally, the Mussulman is expected to observe the godly principles of moderation and peace. He is seriously warned against the accumulation of worldly goods by the injunctions of the Koran.

Alhākumu'l-takāthuru hattā zurtumu'l-maqābir
—*Latarawunna'l-jahīm.*

“The desire of accumulating wealth will keep you in darkness, till you have seen the grave and seen misery.”

To amass immense wealth and to appropriate to one's own self as much as possible is a purely non-Muslim idea. Luxury is at once declared to be absolutely ungodly. Islamic literature is full of detailed instructions as to what worldly acquirements the Muslim may desire to have, how he should try for them and how he must finally dispose of them. The advantage of this is that he is neither helplessly dependent on the so-called "Civilisation" for his mode of life, nor is he completely at the mercy of fashion and public opinion in regard to other things; but on the other hand he has his solid laws of life and all that concerns it—laws which are based on this one principle that the mission of man on earth is to realise God, and to become harmonised and useful, and that the necessities of life must therefore be so arranged as to be best suited to the attainment of this end. He will earn his livelihood, live in the world, and have worldly attachments, marry and have children, but all this must be done in such a way as to keep him in harmony with God. To reduce this theory into practice, detailed instructions in every branch of life are contained in books of religion. For instance the evil of

drinking is condemned in Islam. The detailed instructions on this head provide among other things that no Mussalman shall under any circumstances have anything to do with the manufacture, sale etc. of wine. Again, however loving the wife or husband may be, the marriage is deemed null and void as soon as either of the parties become irreligious. Without the godly element prevailing, the ideal Mussulman can do nothing in the world. He knows that worldly acquisitions, wife and children, are all to be availed of only as far as they do not hinder the spiritual progress in the path of God. In one sense the Mussulman is God-bound, and must remain so. It is, however, by no means to be understood that he is not amenable to any improvement according to the change of circumstances and times, but he will naturally be diffident where he has reason to believe that godliness is not at the bottom of the proposed reform. In fact his world cannot be separated from his God and his religion.

All the teachings of the Koran and the Hadith clearly point out that life in this world must be regarded as preparatory to life beyond the

grave, and as such must be spent in promoting the happiness and comfort of humanity, and in acquiring and imparting knowledge and establishing harmony between man and God. Based on these theories, life in Islam is distinctly divided into the following three heads :—

(1) To acquire and share with others worldly comforts and to promote the happiness of the world by the increase of wealth, power and all the requisites of an unselfish civilisation. This is recognised in Islam as fairly godly, if done in strict accordance with the injunctions of the code of religion and consequently under such restraints as ensure a noble, unselfish and useful life. The majority of men pursue this course of life, and, in fairness to them, definite and easy, natural and practical instructions have been promulgated in books on religion. These men have at once their moral, social and religious routine and when conforming to it, are given a free hand in the acquirement of worldly comforts. The effect of the teachings of Islam is such that this class of men is generally very practical and easy going. They firmly believe in God and the Hereafter and exert themselves to their utmost to observe

the routine, while still busy in the busy world. Art, commerce, manufacture and all secular learning, lie within the province of this class of men to achieve and live for. They are, whether rich or poor, regarded from a purely religious point of view as *ahl al-dunyā*—"people of the world." The mission of Islam is to teach the men of the world how to live, in the world, the life of peace and purity, and therefore the Muslim "people of the world" should prove themselves by deeds to be the type of humanity, justice, generosity with peace and love guiding their path. He should acquire the world from God, own it in God, give it up for God. His chief consolations in this life and those which should be an uplift to him in after-life are his acts of virtue, moderation of desires, fulfilment of duties and a general harmony of life, all under the influence of one Supreme Thought—God. This is fully achieved by earnestly observing the "Five Pillars" of religion which serve to make man faithful, prayerful, charitable, universal and moderate.

(2) To acquire and impart knowledge of religion. The party which takes up this work is named "*ahl al-'ilm*", "the people of learning."

Their duty is to study the Koran and the Hadith and to promulgate the necessary instructions contained in the religious literature for the practical guidance of the people. The early Muslim *ulemas* or divines compiled from the Koran and Hadith separate books on the different branches of religion, such as beliefs, theories, laws, and practices in daily life and so on ; and it is the duty of the *ulemas* of to-day to carefully examine all these and teach the general public, "the people of the world," the laws of purity and love and all that is necessary for the general harmony of life. It is his chief duty to use his discretion, according to the needs of the times, and as far as religious instructions are concerned, he is in charge of the general public and as such is highly respected. He is either paid by the State or the general public, and, being thus free from the care of earning his bread, is expected to devote the whole of his time to the study and teaching of religion. Public preaching is entirely in the hands of this class of men, but by no means are they regarded as priests, as priesthood is unknown in Islam. There are separate schools for the education and bringing up of the *ulemas*

and when a student has completed his highest course and been successful at the final examination before a committee of learned *ulemas*, he is given a certificate and a turban and is declared to be qualified to preach religion. He teaches both by example and precept the beauties of religion, but is very often in all other respects a householder like the general public. All the injunctions of religion are equally binding on him. He is consulted on all the points, concerning the book-learning of religion and he is an authority on moral, social, and general religious laws.

(3) To explore the Spiritual Realms, to acquire and administer the Realisation of Oneness. Men in charge of this Department of life are called "*ahl Allāh*" "people of God," or Saints. Generally they first finish the course of book-learning and then learn the "knowledge within the heart." Here the selfish Self is subdued, Soul shines out in all its grandeur and the mission of life is realised and accomplished. The Saint is held in the highest respect. Ordinarily he does not work for his bread, nor does he go out preaching religion. His sole concern is to exercise the mind and to

kindle the sacred fire within those who come into contact with him. He still lives in the world and is at all times available for the real service and true education of man. Advanced students of religion and generally those men who are not apparently satisfied with mere worldly success, however noble this may be, and even those *ulemas* who are lucky enough to discover that all the "book-learning" and all the "beliefs" and "observances" are more or less a "Credit" system and that life wants something "Cash," resort to Saints for their final satisfaction. In the essay on "The Spiritual Teachings of Islam," it has been described at some length how a Muslim is elevated to the highest stage of life,—*Tawhīd* or Oneness. The Saint is the Master of Oneness, and living the life of Perfect Harmony and Love; it is his divine duty to administer Consolation and Peace to all those who go to him. He teaches them according to their merits, and, quickening their intuition by the light of his own "Lamp," opens for them the gates of Divine Grace, which then descends of itself on the Seeker. The Saint has, in his store, sufficient instructional material for every one; the energetic, the

emotional, the mystic and the philosopher duly receive spiritual instructions according to their respective line of thought; they realise the beauties of life and reap the fruits of existence by being brought face to face with God. According to their intuitive faculties Saints are divided into three classes :—

- (1) *Kāmil*—"perfect"—Those who have realised.
- (2) *Akmal*—"perfect, progressive in a superlative degree"—Those who can make others perfect (*Kāmil*.)
- (3) *Mukammal*—Perfected *i. e.* Those who can make others *akmal*.

They are further divided into two classes :—

- (a) *Sālik*—the Traveller. These men although fully enjoying the Audience of Light remain in their senses and act like ordinary men, obeying all the disciplinary injunctions of religion.
- (b) *Majdhūb*—Absorbed or distracted. These men are very often so much merged into the Light that they lose their senses and cannot act like ordinary men : some of them occasionally rouse themselves from this state, but there are

others who always remain “ Absorbed ”
without any lucid interval.

The Prophet Muhammed is the model of humanity, and all the three classes of Muslims, described above, try to follow in his footsteps and to copy him as much as possible in their course of life. Accurate and detailed accounts of the Prophet’s mode of life are recorded in the books of Hadith and whenever there is doubt as to the best course of action to be adopted by a certain man, an effort is made to find out how the Prophet acted on a similar case, or at least how he would have acted, and then it is resolved accordingly. This is called “ the *ittibā‘al-sunnah* ” or following the actions of the Prophet, and has been encouraged for various godly reasons. This is one of the peculiarities of Islam. Happily there were so many sides to the life of the Prophet, that a Mussulman of any station or cult can find him a true model to copy ; and this a great help indeed. There is nothing, however, in the instructive life of Muhammad or in the whole Islamic literature to debar a true Mussulman from keeping himself abreast of the advancing civilisation of the world, so long as it does not

mar the spiritual growth and nobility of life. A true Mussulman of any class is expected to lead the life of purity, peace and service ; ever advancing, ever increasing his usefulness, and always "heart within and God overhead."

IV.

DEATH AND AFTER.

Death is that stage of life, in which the soul passes from the physical into the non-physical. The soul is immortal. The body decomposes but the soul remains "composed." It is self-composed and shall ever remain so. The veil of the physical is drawn up and the "Aspirant" is now face to face with *what* was a belief or a hope or even a certainty during the time of physical environments—life in this world. The knowledge of the past—the knowledge gained in the physical world is with it. [We cannot call soul by any masculine or feminine attribute. It is truly neuter, It is it]. And the knowledge of the present—of the non-physical world—, is to be added to it to make its circuit complete—to fulfil the mission. If the soul ever identifies itself with the physical, it is

called ignorance ; if it learns to identify itself with the non-physical, it is termed knowledge. If knowledge is gained while in this world, the soul gets its full liberty on breaking off the physical environments. If however, knowledge is not gained while in this world it has to be gained after the death of the body. For soul cannot possibly remain without knowledge, it is its birthright to gain it, it is its very nature to discover it. The soul which identifies itself with the physical, when becoming bodiless, feels snatched away from its very self, as it were, resulting in all the troubles and uneasiness not uncommon at deathbeds : on the contrary the soul, which has learnt to identify itself with the non-physical, or, in other words, which has discovered its own true nature is happy when leaving the body. "I was never born, never lived (in the worldly sense of the word) and consequently shall never die," are the dictates of a knowing Soul. The soul being only a shadow and reflection of the Divine existence, only a word to express the Divine meaning, is free from all the bondages of material existence. It only reflects, or expresses itself, into the physical while in this world, and into the non-

physical while in the next. The final or the highest stage of the soul is reached when the shadow melts into the existence and the word is dissolved into the meaning.

Then there are neither names nor attributes, neither this, nor that, but an entity, an all absorbing one. *Wa yabqá wajhu rabbika dhāl-jalāli wa'l-ikrām*—and shall only remain the audience of Light. After the death of the body, the soul now unbounded by time, space and causation soars aloft until it reaches—where? Is there any “Where” or “Towards” after the physical environments are cast off? Surely not! But where are the words to express the exact spiritual conditions? The soul after the departure from body, after being divested of alien matter gradually unfolds its full spiritual energies, if such were not fully unfolded while in physical bondage; this gradual unfolding marking the several stages of life beyond the grave. In the parabolical language of sacred writings so easily comprehensible to the common mind, these several stages of spiritual evolution of soul, are described in the following terms. After its departure from the body, the soul is first questioned as to the existence of

God, and the mission of life. This examination is conducted by two angels in the grave. The soul is there. If it could ever remain in the body it can also remain present with it, whenever required. If the examination is successful that is, if the soul is a knowing soul, rest and peace are administered to it. If, on the contrary, the examination is unsuccessful, pain and suffering is the result. In the latter case the soul gets cognizant, with the fact that ignorance—the taint of physical life—is to be removed. The pure must be pure to be received into the pure. The soul is pure, and there is also all purity above or beyond the physical. Any ideas of its identification with the physical are impure where the soul is concerned. If the soul has received a colouring from these, it has to be washed off before the soul is admitted into the colourless purity. The first questionings and the results being over, everything sinks into spaceless, timeless, and causeless oblivion, and bodies after bodies and souls after souls continuing to merge in this ocean, a state of existence is reached, where the starting point, the progressive stages, and the Goal are all arraigned on one plane—the eternal plane. This is described as the end,

the last day and so on. God is there. All the souls are also present a complete and thorough examination will be made, Prophets and all knowing souls will help the souls deficient in knowledge. Then a march will be made towards the Light. A fine bridge will have to be crossed—the bridge of knowledge *i. e.* knowing souls will cross it, ignorance will be cut to pieces and thrown down. Souls thrown down and left behind, will feel tortured. Souls which have crossed the bridge shall feel blessed. This blessing and torture have been exemplified by residence into Heaven and Hell respectively. The tortured souls, as they get the knowledge and cast off ignorance gradually, will be passed into Heaven, where there shall be eternal bliss and audience of Light. The descriptions given above, however apparently material in their character, cannot fail to mark the stages of spiritual evolution. As we pass on in material existence, so must we pass on in spiritual existence. This “passing” only stops where the Audience of Light is gained. Pass on, pass on, cross over, cross over and the Light is yours.

THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

I propose in this discourse to treat of those inward faculties, by the right understanding and employment of which a door is thrown open to every legitimate advancement of mankind, and human life is made precious and a fit subject for thanksgiving.

Among the known activities of life in man the imaginative faculty occupies a position of high importance ;—so much so that in most of its phases a large part of man's existence is built up of the mere result of sentiment. If the effervescence of sentiment is caused by the fermentation of some genuine and healthy matter, then a man's life will be established upon thoroughly sound and enduring principles; and if the contrary be the case, a contrary result will ensue. An emotion of the highest order produced within the soul of man from *some* healthy matter is what we call 'faith'. To the development and expansion of faith we give the name of 'religious convictions'; and the effect which these two, acting in concert, produce upon the sentiments, and the manner in which a life is built up under the shadow of

those sentiments are what we understand by the word 'conduct'.

At the bottom of the soul there is a healthy reality, of which the impact, whenever an emotion is produced in it, strikes directly upon the target of the soul; and from that point the whole struggle in man's being originates. It behoves us, then to ascertain, first of all what thing that healthy reality is in its nature; and, since the existence of all that is solid and good in the world proceeds from its impulses, what are the means by which it can be set in motion.

The life of all the world,—nay, the life even of life, the depth below every surface,—nay, the bed of that depth, is one single Master-nature, within whom are hidden all those energies, which, after they have assumed a visible form in the world of phenomenon and cause, are the aggregate of the laws governing creation and the survival and extinction of created beings. The Master-nature pervades and permeates every visible thing, and it is for this reason alone that man, so far as he represents the Master-nature in the highest degree, has power over the causes which are at work in the Master-nature's discretion. We may call

these causes the aggregate of the laws determining creation, and the survival or extinction of created beings. To make a complete list of these causes, to have a right understanding of them, and to act with due regard for them — these alone give mankind any right to the title of “Lords of creation.”

If the Master-nature were not single and unchangeable, no notion of totality could have arisen in the world. The concepts of Unity and Invariability could never even have occurred to societies and individuals. If the Master-nature were something purely inert, and the causes mentioned above did not have a continuous existence in his discretion, no individual life could obtain warmth from Him, and thus lay hold upon its own development. There would not be this stir and movement in all the visible world, but a state of things which one might fitly call an absolute stagnation. Our very consciousness of each other is sufficient to show that such a state is an absurdity. The mere statement that ‘Man seeks advancement’ is evidence of the fact that the Master-nature is in a state of activity, while the latter assumption makes his own advance-

ment an incumbent duty upon man. Thus each of these facts is a proof of the other.

From this statement of the cause we learn that the healthy reality in the soul, of which we spoke, ~~is~~ the Master-nature, and that its prime impulse is advancement, which is the very faith of man. We learn also that the pivot of advancement is not outside, but inside, a man :—

‘ I traversed all the world in hope to find Thee, yet I found Thee not :

‘ Then in my heart I looked at last ;—and there Thou didst reveal Thyself.’

The next step is to examine the causes which are the main factors in the government of the world, and to consider what faculties there are within man himself, which are able to grapple with these causes. To search these causes out, and to bring into play, outside us, those faculties which are capable of mastering them, is to put into motion the healthy matter of our souls. It is the only thorough means of effecting this object. We have concluded that to seek advancement is in truth man’s religion. But it still remains for us to consider in what

matters advance is to be made, and what means for our advancement exist inside us.

The origin of all created things, and, if I may say so, the original secret of creation is Love. The whole of Nature's stock is seasoned with this cordial. A convincing proof of this assertion is that in individual lives, by comparison with all their other constituent parts, this part is by far the most universal, and the most engrossing. Love is the ground plot of the whole theatre of existence. In the setting up of Love, a sense of Justice is called into activity ;—and this is the reason why every living thing shrinks from unmerited harshness, and why even a slave retains in his heart the hope of Justice. As a security for the setting up of Justice, we have been endowed with Courage ;—and since the first word was spoken to the present day, not even a cart has been moved—nor ever will be moved—without Courage.

Love, Justice, and Courage, then, may be accepted as the essential and dominant factors in the government of the world, and all the others as ramifications from these. It is the duty of every man who seeks advancement, to make himself sensitive to the operation of these parts

of his existence, and to welcome the full effect of their influence upon his sentiments. Since these ruling elements pervade the whole world, every individual life is equally susceptible to their influence; and wherever we see a result which is at variance with this, we may be certain that some forbidding circumstances prevent their influence from being felt in the inner nature of men. The highest satisfaction in living is to observe these elements performing their work within oneself in their freest and most effectual manner, and to give unstinted recognition to the fact of their connection with their fountain-head, that is, with the deep waters of the Master-nature. In the inner world, these elements are reproduced in the guise of faith, religion, sentiments, and aspirations. In the outer world, these, and no other than these, assume their manifestation in deeds at their own proper times and places. In each case, both in the visible and the invisible world, it is their energy which is at work; and since they themselves derive their force from the Master-nature, therefore 'He is the Outer and the Inner' is an admitted article of faith.

Our making advancement is simply this :

that Love should expand within us ; that Justice should be our rule of practice ; that Courage should at all times act as our forerunner ; that, so far as these are linked to us internally, we should exert our internal faculties in their cause ; and that, so far as they are mixed up with the outer medley of life, we should give them free play in our outward powers. In this matter, we have the means within us for being successful, in that, in the first place we believe ourselves to have been originally and specially designed for advancement ; and next the Bounteous Creator, by the effulgence of whose bounty Love, Justice and Courage are sustained, is ever present to us as a ready-made 'Ideal' of life ; nay—He is that very 'Ideal' which seeks manifestation in our lives. In accordance with the text 'Verily I am forming a vicegerent to be in the earth'—"I have a representative on earth", it is our bounden duty to bring Him into outward being and action in the highest degree attainable by us. After we have reached this inner conviction, what remains for us is to endeavour to the utmost to keep that Ideal before our eyes. He Himself will create a fire-kindler in our hearts, of which the effect will

be, that even the extrinsic causes of advancement will all be furnished to our hands.

So far we have been discussing principles. I now wish to say a few words impromptu as to their practical application. In what way does it behove us, Mussulmans of India, to restore their lustre to Love, Justice, and Courage? and what use are we to make of them in practice, suitable to the tendencies and requirements of the present age? Our actual condition, in which, owing to the manifest *absence* of advancement, "God's heaven and earth seem to be straitened upon us," is undoubtedly subject to the fixed laws of nature. It is in virtue of those laws that we are in a state of abasement. By conformity with those laws it is possible for us to rise. The reason of our fall is that we have acted in opposition to those world-compelling laws; that we have dissipated and weakened our instincts of love; that we have turned our faces away from justice; and that we have clothed our courage in women's garments. Our prospect of rising too is in our power; if we gather up our scattered affections and concentrate our energies upon the advancement of our own people; if in obedience to the dictates

of justice, we govern our whole conduct by the recognition of what is due to the Almighty, and what is due to His worshippers; above all, if we stir up every particle that is left in us of courage and high endeavour, and expend it upon the happiness and well-being of our race. In my opinion, it behoves every Mussalman to make a renewal of his faith. If any one has thought, up till now, that the performance of some few religious observances, by mere force of habit, and as it were mechanically, is sufficient for our salvation while with our eyes closed to all that is around us, we lie at rest in our present state of depression; if he thinks that for *this* God and His apostle are well pleased with us;—it behoves him as quickly as possible to extricate himself from this error. We have already shown that the distinctive duty of man is to seek his own advancement. It should be the creed of every Mussulman that he will be worthy of salvation only so far as he seeks advancement in accordance with the design of God and His apostle. There was a time, when in pursuance of the attainment of this design, and to please God and His apostle, Mussulmans had to give up their lives,—to be robbed of

their wealth,—to be turned out of their homes, and from the doors of their friends. By God's favour, not one of these bitter trials presents itself to us Mussulmans of India. The objects we have to work for are few and well-defined. Having once realised in our hearts that the improvement of our own condition is pleasing to God and His Prophet, what we have chiefly to bestir ourselves about is true loyalty, the advancement of education, the preservation of our mental and bodily powers, and the practice of economy. For the outflow of our love, we have a vast field immediately under our eyes in the mass of uncared for, thoughtless and ignorant Mussulmans. It needs but a little attention, a little piety, a little true humility on our part, to create a bond of love and sympathy with them.

Among the followers of Islam, pictures from the first, have not existed; or, if they have existed, the instances have been very rare. But specimens of calligraphy, portraying the names of God, or notable sayings, or sublime verses, were generally to be found hung up in the halls of well-to-do-people, and the intention was that they should from time to time incite

an inclination towards the practice of virtue. Now that the list of virtues which are specially adapted to the present age has been reconstructed, it is but fitting that we should keep that list before us in representation of various kinds ; in specimens of calligraphy ; in texts of ordinary handwriting ; in pictures ; in short, in whatever way we can, which answers the purpose. Here, some device for keeping in our memory our duty to orphans ; there, some lament over the ignorance and bigotry of the people, to soften our hearts ; here some ghastly picture of the results of extravagance, to make us tremble ; and there some sketch of infidelity, which may bring tears of blood into our eyes. Make a trial of this plan, and see how long it will be without effect. At first, perhaps you may laugh at the notion ; but it is a thing to be done ; and among the recognised methods of bettering the soul, it is one method. I would merely add a slight innovation upon it, which is this. Let a man, at certain times when his mind is unoccupied,—let him, I say, sit down alone ; and communing with his own soul, repeat such phrases as, ‘The advancement of education,’ ‘The preservation of our faculties,’ ‘The

practice of economy,' &c., &c. After a short time, by virtue of its own habit, a man's heart will spontaneously give room to these aspirations, and receive them into itself and when they have once obtained a dwelling in the heart, what will there be to prevent their outward manifestation? One most excellent plan for keeping the brain and the soul healthy, and directing their energies to healthy objects is that a man should keep up a practice of belauding good things, and good deeds, and good people. The advantages of this plan, and the ease with which it operates can be discovered in a very few days. Suppose, for instance, that any person has given up fifteen minutes, or half an hour, in the early morning, to dwelling upon the beauties of some lovely object, or some fine passage in a book, or some heroic action, and and has afterwards been fully occupied with the ordinary affairs of the world; after some six or seven hours of hard work, there will come upon him spontaneously a state in which he will experience a release from all kinds of shackles, and will find himself brisk and eager to make progress. Whereas, on the contrary, if he has spent the same amount of time over any

thing revolting and abhorrent, and feelings of indignation or disgust have been aroused in him, then, after the same interval, he will be assailed by a sense of depression, under the influence of which he will imagine himself to be the creature of circumstances, oppressed and fettered by events; all of which notions are fatal to any advancement.

By practical devices, such as these, which we are able to bring into employment only through our inward faculties, many of those hindrances, which keep our courage at a low standard, will be removed; and our desire for advancement will begin to train its wings for higher and higher flights.

One inward device for the attainment of active purity in life is for a man to think frequently of his mother, or sister, or daughter, or other sacred relative, and to utter prayers on their behalf. To pray is to put one's soul into motion in connection with some irresistible thought. Suppose you repeat such a prayer as this, 'O God! make me a participator in the spread of knowledge,'—To the extent to which you are locked up within yourself when you utter this prayer, to that

extent will your soul be influenced and impregnated with it,—the deeper the gilding the more perfect will be its efficacy.

For preserving the body in health, every one, when the need arises, takes certain precautions—diets himself, and swallows physic. Let me give you a very simple prescription ; and if it should not do for you all that Kind's essence and double distilled brandy can do,—then let me know. Do not put it by as a joke, but give it a fair trial for ten days or so, and watch its effect. This is it. For the space of time intervening between five minutes before every meal, and five minutes after it put yourself into a religious frame of mind, and give yourself up to a sense of thankfulness. You will soon perceive what a polish your heart and brain will acquire, and what perfect health you will enjoy. To perform these exercises may seem a little arduous and unprofitable at the beginning, but after a very few days the benefit of them will be realised, and your lips will give vent to the lines —

Oh ! the years wasted in pining
 for the cup of Jamshid ?—
 When my heart begged of an outsider
 a boon of what it owned.

It is not that we do not *know* things. We know our backwardness ; we know the progress made by others ; we are aware of the blessings of religion ; we receive constant evidence of the benefits we owe to good government ; we understand what things they are which we stand in need of ; and what the rules are under which they are procurable. What is lacking to us is simply this, that our power to *do* the things is not *as* great as it ought to be. The plan of rousing the public by lectures and discourses is *one* method of increasing our stock of practical energy ; and since it was first commenced, the nation is day by day pulling itself together. My whole endeavour in this discourse is to submit that we should *also* pay attention to the active exercise of our inward faculties.

Let us suppose the case of a man with desultory habits of thought, who is unable to achieve some good work which demands singleness of aim. We give him, say, some book to read, in which the evils of distraction and the virtue of concentration of effort are set forth ;—we get him to hear lectures ;—we incite his ambition ;—we recount to him the instances of persons who have failed in life through the

dissipation of their energies, or who have attained their objects by fixity of purpose. By all these efforts we try to rouse him from his lethargy ; and to a certain extent we attain our object. These are what I call eternal devices ; and what I declare is that these are eternal means of ridding oneself of distraction and creating a fixity of purposes, which are independent of these *internal* measures, and by many degrees more efficacious. To a man of that kind I at once prescribe certain strict rules for his daily life, and teach him to call into play his *internal* faculties. The times, when nature is most nearly in a state of repose, are the evening and the early morning, but more especially the latter. Let him retire at such a time for a brief period, and having sat down, let him meditate in silence upon some word, some text, or some thought of his own ; then let him abandon it, and occupy himself diligently with his other affairs. Let him do this again the next day, and so continue doing it for several days. He will acquire the *habit* of concentration. The easiest plan of all for a mere beginner to start with is to count the movements of the breath. In each breath there is one movement downwards

and one upwards. Let him fix his attention upon that ; and by degrees he will obtain the faculty of concentration.

There is a regular science of these meditative and disciplinary practices of the imagination, by learning which a man may become the master, instead of the slave, of himself ; nay he will become a real man. We possessed the art at one time, but it has perished. In America thousands of men put it in practice to this day, and no stage of advancement seems to them to be impossible. In confirmation of this I will relate an incident of my personal experience. Some years ago, there came to India an American gentleman of great abilities, a doctor well versed in natural science, one who has a leading reputation in many of the States. When he was at Naini Tal, I, among others, went to call on him. Some ten or fifteen persons, both Mussulmans and Hindus were present. The conversation fell upon the want of patriotism in the country. He said he could tell us of a practical inward remedy for that. The next evening he took us all into a separate room, and made us sit down in a semicircle opposite to him ; then he told us to close our eyes, and

looking inwardly to our souls, to imagine that a tree was springing up from us and giving shade to the whole world. We did this for about ten minutes, and even so our attention gave way now and then. But we did experience a marvellous exhilaration ; and since his departure from India, several of us individually have held similar seances, and have found our faculties greatly brightened by comparison with the past, and our stock of courage and sympathy and other similar instincts greatly increased.

Those who wish to be doing something, for their own sake, for the people's sake; for the country's sake, for religion's sake, should not fail to give some attention also to this art. For beginners in it moderation in diet is very beneficial ; and they ought to avoid those kinds of food, and those associations and occupations which lead to any excess. Moderation is in itself natural to man. Wherever he has these counter influences under his control, and his internal energy can burn with a pure flame,—then, look how high the fire-balloon of his life will ascend !

By the most beautiful of coincidences, and

H

the most admirable of pre-ordainments, religion tells us of a treasure-house of absolute perfection, open to us at all times, no other than God Himself, to whom, in all our fancies, and anxieties, and aspirations, we can resort for every need of our own, and for the illumination of the entire range of our spiritual faculties. If we wish to enhance the fervour of our love, what higher source of love can we think of than God? If we wish to make our sense of equity ripe for action, to whom can we go save to Him? And with whom is the key of high endeavor to be found, if not with Him? In short, the more we cherish within ourselves the contiguity of God, and the nearer we approach to the water of life, that is, to the Divine nature, by making our thoughts, and words, and prayers subservient to this one object,—so much the more will our lives prove useful and beneficial to society. Is the task easy? I answer, Yes. Is it full of difficulty? again I answer, Yes.

Do you ask of me the distance to the street of your Beloved?
As the quest urges you onward ;—it is near ; *or* it is far.

THE RELIGION OF CIVILISATION.

—: o :—

In the past, Religion has claimed to produce Civilisation, while in our own times, Civilisation appears to be on the way to produce Religion. It, therefore, seems desirable to cast a glance over the affairs of modern civilisation, both as regards its effect on the existing ethical systems and its latent properties of man-making elements. Our chief object in this analysis will be to discover how far modern civilisation has relieved religion of its work of regulating the social and moral life of men, and in what respects it falls short of presenting a complete guide for the race. We shall also try to see if it ever will be possible to have a Religion of Civilisation, and if so, how much of the Religion of to-day ought to be assimilated with modern civilisation to achieve this end.

2. At the outset a great question is involved, and it is this. Does the individual live for himself, or is there some universal

cause, to which all individuals ought to contribute? Are we not in one sense like the earth, revolving on our own axis and at the same time rotating round the Universal Sun? Ancient systems of moral philosophy show us that one Universal Principle is manifesting itself in all individualities, aye, in everything perceptible and comprehensible. It shows that the tree is nothing but the seed evolved, and that the seed is the tree involved. In a later scripture, the Koran, we are reminded that "He is the beginning, He is the ending, He is the Evolution, He is the Involution"—We might therefore safely conclude that the individual while yet a distinct element of evolution, rests entirely in Universality, and the individual evolution, development or progress is accurate and creditable according as it contributes to the speedy ascent of the Universal balloon. In this view of life, we are required to shun and give up many of those of our inclinations and aspirations which seem to serve purely personal and selfish causes. Many of our apparently selfish and fleshy desires and greeds must be sacrificed in favor of more altruistic, and nobler functions of life,

the nucleus of the Universal life. This is probably the whole theme of religion. Every thing else which goes by the name of moral life, social system or even intellectual or spiritual culture is the outcome of that one principle. Willingly or unwillingly have we to follow this one path. So says religion.

3. Similarly, the fruits of a civilised life are essentially altruistic and universal, although it does not seem so always. Civilisation apparently enjoins the building up of the individual, and the assertion of individual rights in a way best suited to the progress of a nation, of a country, of a race &c. The individual is thus intended to be expanded into the Universal, only that the view of universality taken is rather narrow or limited. The individual is first built up and established and then passed over, of course for a broader cause, although not exactly for a purely universal cause, as Religion would put it. All the advancement in science and art, in inventions, discoveries and commerce &c., which all play such an important part in the general welfare of the people have been made in the name of, and may justly be regarded as, its fruits Civilisation.

On the other hand, civilisation has achieved for itself most wonderfully what, admittedly, religion has failed to do in the past. It is the building up of one common platform for all denominations and creeds to meet and treat each other in a common desirable way. We have fixed laws of etiquette and common treatment and every gentleman, worth the title, will observe these laws without any distinction of creed or form, when coming into contact with another man. Here civilisation has struck the right chord of universal life, and here lies the nucleus of what may, if properly understood and earnestly followed, be expanded into a really Universal system, answering the "best" religion, all the requirements of an organised social and moral life.

4. Where a system touching, to any great extent, the lives of a multitude of people is involved, there is evidently no reason why it should not be treated like a religion, and as such approached with great consideration and reverence. Civilisation is fast organising itself into such a system, and therefore, it has been deemed proper to give this article the title it bears. Civilisation in its proper sense enjoins

the realisation of the duties of man, the acquirement of knowledge, the fullest development and useful employment of all noble faculties, the advancement of the interests of the community, nation and the country and the adoption of common ways of mutual treatment, etiquette, dress &c. As is essential, when any principle is reduced into practice in the daily lives of individuals, conventionalities, ceremonials and formalities have also become the attendants of the modern civilisation, robbing it of many of its original charms. This has equally been the fate of the religious principles. This, therefore, is apparently an unavoidable law. But too much of it must be avoided, and, I am confident, the advocates of civilisation are already alive to this necessity.

5. Now as regards the duties of man, alluded to above, the recognition of which civilisation enjoins, there is no question that most of these come in the category of social duties, evolved and enjoined by society. If civilisation really aims at the recognition of these duties, and if as we see, it has achieved much in that direction, it has certainly relieved religion of much of its past work of defining

and regulating the social necessities of man. All that could, therefore, be left to the province of religion, would, doubtless be the essentially spiritual development. Is religion willing to narrow its limits to this one branch, and delegate all other functions to civilisation, is the question of the moment. Is it desirable? Is it possible and practicable? Where is the answer? The civilised world is steadily progressing on its own lines, glorying in the achievements of civilised life, treating religion more or less imperceptibly, as a relic of the past. Religious institutions, on the other hand, are trying in vain to keep under their banners all that they had conquered in the past in the directions of spiritual, moral, social and intellectual development of man, casting on the growing civilisation not always a sympathetic look. Can this go on indefinitely? Will ever civilisation surrender all its acquirements to religion and be content to act as its agent? Very doubtful. Will religion ever, humble itself to such an extent as to forego many of its past claims, and hail and welcome civilisation as a relief, and give it an equally important place in human affairs? Willingly not.

6. In proceeding further, one great point ought to be taken into consideration that Religion is invariably offered as the outcome of Divine intelligence and revelation, and as everything which constitutes the life of man has been taken account of, and legislated for, by Religion, it will be argued on behalf of it that nothing which has once entered into its category by virtue of its being Divine, can be taken out of it, and relegated to any other system, (such as Civilisation), however useful it may be. At the same time, it is a self-evident truth, that while modern civilisation, as a whole, does not trace its origin to any Divine revelation, it has chiefly built itself in part by means of the materials collected, rather borrowed, from Divine religions. Thus at least so much of it is Divine as has been taken from Religion. But still it will be taken as a blasphemy to divide and distribute religion in this way.

7. The modern tendency of the revival of religions is, again, an important matter for serious consideration, before any verdict is passed in favor of modern civilisation. Each religion is trying hard to revive and enliven its old traditions and functions on purely sec-

tarian lines. Is this all necessary? Is it possible that these sectarian efforts will bear fruit and form sectarian civilisations, any thing worth matching the paramount modern civilisation? The latter has, no doubt, been initiated and built up by Europe and naturally may be regarded as the compendium of Christian morality and sociology, supplemented to a great extent by the broader sense of mutual treatment between man and man, warranted, as it has become, by freer intercourse between different countries and peoples. So naturally the question will finally resolve itself into an enquiry as to whether the intended civilisation of the sectarian religions (including Christianity, for Christianity, too, is trying to build up a purely Christian civilisation and does not entirely acquiesce in Modern Civilisation) will ever reach to a point where the "condensed" modern civilisation will be thrown in the back-ground, or become unnecessary and be proclaimed "Not Wanted." In this analysis, it has been presumed that, all the once organised great religions of the world, have long ceased to exercise any appreciable influence on the ordinary daily lives of men. Their tenets

have been more or less neglected in practice, and forms and rituals are all that remain to tell the past healthy influence of religion. It is not the business of the present discussion to trace the downfall of religious civilisation or to prove that this downfall has brought about modern civilisation, but, it may safely be concluded that modern civilisation is progressing chiefly because religions are ignoring many of our new wants imposed by vast intercourse between countries and men, and are not sufficiently elastic to embrace all the progressive achievements of the progressive man.

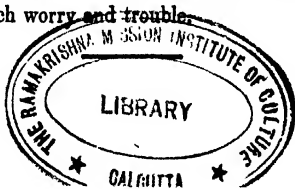
8. Now, to come to a conclusion on the different questions raised in the above discussion, and without in the least wishing to go into details, we shall make a few remarks, trusting that they will only be regarded as mere suggestions, for future serious consideration by the readers. The ordinary daily life, with its keen competition all round, and struggle for existence, seems to enjoin a very busy, active and energetic life, where self interests should not only be fully protected but immensely advanced, that at least in each country if not in each continent or all over

the world, common ways of life and mutual treatment should be adopted, and that where intercourse between different countries and nations is concerned, very courteous and business-like rules should be observed. The advancement of learning, art and commerce, the development of the resources of the country, the healthy study of the problems of Economics, and the promotion of facilities of life, are apparently the mission of the civilised life of to-day. All these may safely be left to the province of Civilisation to cultivate and improve. Similarly all questions of dress, dietary, household management, birth, marriage and death, spending of money in charitable causes should be consigned to civilisation to enquire into and legislate for. In fact everything that constitutes the outer, social and intellectual needs of man, should be taken up by civilisation, leaving to Religion proper, only the spiritual development of the race.

9. Had civilisation, like many of its achievements, kept in view, the most important part of human culture and built itself up upon some common spiritual principle the sectarian religions of the world, would, no doubt, have a very dark future before them, but in as much

as civilisation does not lend to satisfy the spiritual yearnings of man, and does not make him free from the bondage of the senses, it has entirely failed to act as a complete guide to the world. Were I to adopt to-day the most advanced of the modern European ways of Civilisation I would certainly remain in the dark as to my present and future spiritual career even if civilisation were to take into account all our social, moral and intellectual needs. None of the deep questions of my soul—where have I come from, why, and where have I to go?—shall be answered, and if the outer conventional civilisation fails to administer that internal peace which at times my soul so passionate requires, what should I do? Here essentially religion is needed. Then again, since the spiritual, moral, social and intellectual phases of life are all connected together by many common ties, or rather, since the healthier and stronger the spiritual notions, the broader and brighter the moral and other principles will be it is worthy of serious consideration that if spirituality is not at the back of civilisation why it should not be deemed incomplete for the fullest development of human beings.

10. Religion has failed to organise thoroughly common and universal civilisation while on the other hand, the latter has not built itself up upon purely spiritual principle and is, therefore, incomplete. Should both be retained or assimilated? The only possible solution of this difficulty, seems to be to urge that the advocates of civilisation should try to adopt some purely spiritual common principles as their leading theories, and remodel everything else on them. As there is so much sectarianism amongst religions, and as there is apparently much of universality in civilisation, it seems more feasible for the latter to organise and complete itself than for the former to give up their sectarianisms and feuds. The future busy and practical world will hardly find time to go for one thing to religion and for the other to civilisation. The Religion of Civilisation is all that will be required in future and it is our conviction that if modern civilisation of Europe is remodelled on general lines taught by Islam, which is the least sectarian and the most universal of all the existing religions, the world will be saved much worry and trouble.



297/QAR



3919

